

M.N. and the Yorkshire Circle:  
The Motivation Behind the Translation of the  
*Mirouer des Simples Ames* in Fourteenth-Century England  
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## ABSTRACT

In 1999, Geneviève Hasenohr announced the discovery of a fragment of Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer des Simples Ames*, a work condemned by the Church at the University of Paris in 1310, hidden in a manuscript at the Bibliothèque municipale in Valenciennes. The fragment corresponds with roughly two chapters in the only extant French version of the manuscript (Chantilly, Musée Condé MS F XIV 26), and when compared with other editions of the *Mirouer*, it appears to be composed in what might have been Marguerite Porete's native dialect. The discovery changed scholars' perceptions of the weight of the various versions and translations – the Chantilly manuscript had been used previously to settle any questions of discrepancy, but now it appears that the Continental Latin and Middle English translations should be the arbiters.

This discovery has elevated the Middle English editions, and has made the question of the translator's identity – he is known only by his initials M.N. – and background more imperative to an understanding of why a work with such a dubious history would be translated and harbored by English Carthusians in the century that followed its condemnation. The only candidate suggested for translator of the *Mirouer* has been Michael Northburgh (d. 1361), the Bishop of London and co-founder of the London Charterhouse, where two of the three remaining copies of the translation were once owned, but the language of the text and Northburgh's own position and interests do not fit this suggestion. My argument is that the content of the book, the method of its translation, its selection as a work for a Latin-illiterate audience, all fit within the interests of a circle of

writers based in Yorkshire at the end of the fourteenth century. By beginning among the Yorkshire circle, and widening the search to include writers with a non-traditional contemplative audience, one that exists outside of the cloister – writers like Walter Hilton, the anonymous authors of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Chastising of God's Children*, and Nicholas Love – we may have a better chance of locating and understanding the motives of the Middle English translator of the *Mirouer*.

## DEDICATION

For the four women who most influenced this work:

For Marguerite, my subject, who inspired me by writing the *Mirouer*,

For Rosalynn, my teacher, who inspired me to read the *Mirouer*,

For Helen, my aunt, who inspired me to pursue my degree,

And, most especially,

For Becky, my wife, who inspires me every day.

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To all of the scholars who shared information with me and encouraged my studies of Marguerite Porete, especially Michael Sargent, Zan Kocher, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Wendy Terry, Robert Lerner, Sean Field, Ellen Babinsky, Nancy Black, and David Burr.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Who was the Middle English translator of Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer des Simples Ames*? When did he live, and why did he translate into the vernacular a book judged heretical, which would increase the number and type of people who could be exposed to this condemned work? In the century since the Middle English *Mirror* was rescued from obscurity by Evelyn Underhill in 1911, scholars have speculated on his identity.<sup>1</sup> Since the work was identified as the condemned *Mirouer des Simples Ames* of Marguerite Porete by Romana Guarnieri in 1946, speculation has been made about why this book would have been translated into English. Several assumptions have been made in attempting to answer this question, not only about the work but also about the time in which he lived and worked. These assumptions have shaped the modern conception of spiritual contemplation in England during the fourteenth century. By examining this work and the assumptions made about the translator in the context of other writers of the period, we might discover a more dynamic spirituality and a more widespread literacy than has been realized for the end of the fourteenth century.

In 1927, Clare Kirchberger – the first scholar of the twentieth century to

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<sup>1</sup> Evelyn Underhill, "The Mirror of Simple Souls," *Fortnightly Review* (1911): 345-354. Evelyn Underhill translated portions of the translator's prologue in her introduction to the *Mirror*.



render the entire *Mirror* into modern English<sup>2</sup> – suggested that the Middle English translator of the *Mirouer* — known to us only by the initials M.N. — might be Michael Northburgh, the Bishop of London who died in 1361. She was, however, dubious about the possibility because of Northburgh’s “character, occupation, and date of death (1361).” She did not rule him out completely, but said his identification with the translator was “unlikely, but not impossible.”<sup>3</sup> At the time of their respective writing, both Kirchberger and Evelyn Underhill believed the author of the French book M.N. had translated to be a man, probably a contemplative.<sup>4</sup>

In 1946, Romana Guarnieri identified the author of the Middle French *Mirouer* found in Chantilly (Musée Condé MS F xiv 26) as Marguerite Porete, a “beguine clergesse” burned at the stake in Paris on June 1, 1310, along with the

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<sup>2</sup> Clare Kirchberger, trans., *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, (New York, Benziger Brothers, 1927). Kirchberger used Bodleian MS 505 as the basis of her translation.

<sup>3</sup> Kirchberger, *Mirror*, xxxv.

<sup>4</sup> Underhill writes: “The original version of this book, then, was probably written in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, and certainly before 1306. Its writer was no provincial recluse, but a person in touch with the intellectual life of his time. He had connections with the University of Paris, but the names of his patrons prove him to have been neither a member nor an enemy of the Mendicant Orders. It is probable that he was a monk, possible that he was a Carthusian; a strictly contemplative order, celebrated for its mystical leanings, which produced, in the later Middle Ages, many students of the Dionysian writings, and many works upon contemplation. His lost book is so far our only evidence that abstruse prose treatises of this kind were already written in the vernacular; and this alone gives it great interest from the literary point of view. He is the first French mystic to write in French; the forerunner of St. Francis de Sales, of Madame Guyon, of Malaval; and, if we except the semi-mystical writings of Gerson, it is not until the seventeenth century that his country provides him a worthy successor.” (Underhill 349-350).

book after it had been deemed heretical by a jury of Church scholars during a trial in the previous months. Not much is known about the author beyond what is found in the records of the trial, which are incomplete. She was likely from the region known as Hainaut in the north of France, to which her trial transcripts attest; her book had already been condemned by Bishop Guy de Colmieu of Cambrai (d. 1306) in Valenciennes, a city of the region. The reasons for the original condemnation of the book, and her own condemnation at the hands of William Humbert at the University of Paris are not entirely clear – the bishop’s list of condemnations is lost, and only two of the articles cited against Marguerite Porete at her trial can be reconstructed from the chronicles written by William of Nangis. A third article has been extracted from a papal bull by Clement V, written at the Council of Vienne in 1312, called *Ad Nostrum*. These three articles target specific passages in the *Mirouer* as being heretical.<sup>5</sup>

The *Mirouer*, as it exists now, is a description of the seven stages required to achieve union with God as revealed in a dialogue between three allegorical characters: Love (who represents God), Reason, and the Soul. All three characters are female and their debate mainly consists of Reason questioning Love about the nature of this Soul who has been “annihilated” and exists only to fulfill the will of God. Several other characters, such as “Holy Church the Little,” “The Person of God the Father,” and the “Virtues” speak now and again, mostly to reinforce

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<sup>5</sup> Marilyn Doiron (ed.), “Margaret Porete: ‘The Mirror of Simple Souls’ A Middle English Translation,” *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà* (1968): 241-355; and Edmund Colledge, Judith Grant, and J. C. Marler, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), ix.

either Love's or the Soul's position against the relentless questioning of Reason.<sup>6</sup>

The *Mirouer* takes us through the seven stages of contemplation, which is also broken down into what the Soul calls the three deaths (the death of sin, the death of the spirit, and finally bodily death). The first four stages follow the death of sin and require that the Soul be faithful to the commandments and the teachings of the Church. These stages culminate in the death of the spirit, which allows the Soul to join with God in the fifth and sixth stages. The seventh is the utter surrender to God in which the Soul becomes one with him completely in the afterlife.<sup>7</sup>

The *Mirouer* begins by comparing the Soul's longing for God to the character of Candace from the *Roman d'Alexandre*, a popular courtly piece about a woman who falls in love with a description of a king of a faraway land and has her court artists paint his portrait for her. Marguerite Porete compares the portrait to the book that she is writing, as it is her description of her union with God, which she later explains is impossible to describe. By employing romance in her work, she seems to be addressing an audience that is not confined to the cloister.<sup>8</sup> Though the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius, Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventure,

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<sup>6</sup> Ellen L. Babinsky, trans., *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1993). For quotes and names from the French *Mirouer*, I will rely upon Ellen Babinsky's translation.

<sup>7</sup> This brief description is taken from Chapter 118 of the *Mirouer* (Babinsky 189-194), but it is discussed throughout the book in a cyclical pattern in which the descriptions become deeper as the book progresses.

<sup>8</sup> Babinsky 80.

and a host of other intellectual and spiritual writers can be detected in the *Mirouer*, it is clear that the book was not made for a university-trained audience. This makes Marguerite Porete a complex character, whose origins and training can only be guessed.

Guarnieri's discovery of the Chantilly manuscript and its connection to Marguerite Porete eclipsed any talk of the Middle English versions of the text. The lone French manuscript was the primary source for translations of the work throughout the rest of the twentieth century, and the Middle English editions – apart from Marilyn Doiron's 1965 edition of the Cambridge manuscript – were all but ignored by modern scholars.<sup>9</sup> The question of who M.N. might have been was put aside, and the discussion focused on the newly discovered author. Little was written about why the book might have been translated into English (and Italian and Latin<sup>10</sup>) after having been condemned, and the simple answer offered by Nicholas Watson was that M.N. was ignorant of the condemnation and that he stood as a representative of England's isolation from Continental discussions of

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<sup>9</sup> There are three known English editions: British Library MS Additional 37790, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 505, and Cambridge, St. John's College, MS 71.

<sup>10</sup> There are five known Continental Latin manuscripts (Rome, Vatican Library, MS Latin 4355; Rome, Vatican Library, MS Latin 4953; Rome, Vatican Library MS Rossiano 4; Rome, Vatican Library, MS Chigiano B IV 41; and Rome, Vatican Library, MS Chigiano C IV 85) and one English Latin manuscript translated by Richard Methley in 1491 (Cambridge Pembroke MS 221). There are two different Italian translations. The first appears in several manuscripts listed in Naples, Vienna, and Budapest and the second appears in Rome, Vatican Library MS Ricardiano 1468. See Marleen Cré, *The Medieval Translator 9, Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse, A Study of London, British Library, MS Additional 37790* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 165-166.

theology.<sup>11</sup>

In 1999, Genevieve Hasenohr discovered two chapters of the *Mirouer* tucked into a French translation of Hugh of St. Victor's *De arrha animae* in a compilation held at the Bibliothèque municipale of Valenciennes (MS 239), a discovery brought to the attention of English-speaking scholars by Sean Field and Robert Lerner in 2008.<sup>12</sup> Geneviève Hasenohr notes that the text of the chapters is in the Picard dialect and from an earlier time period than the language used in the Chantilly manuscript, a dialect and time period closer to what is known about Marguerite Porete.<sup>13</sup> In a brief comparison with the English and Latin versions of the *Mirouer*, she argues that the English translations are closer to the Valenciennes text than the text of the Chantilly manuscript, suggesting that M.N.'s translation may be closer to Marguerite Porete's original manuscript than the Chantilly version, which had been used for nearly half a century as a source

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<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Watson, "Melting into God the English Way: Deification in the Middle English Version of Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer des simples âmes anientes*," *Prophets Abroad: The Reception of Continental Holy Women in Late Medieval England* ed. Rosalynn Voaden (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), 47.

<sup>12</sup> Robert E. Lerner, "New Light on *The Mirror of Simple Souls*," *Speculum*, 85 (2010), 1: 95 note 19.

<sup>13</sup> Hasenohr, Geneviève. "La tradition du *Miroir des simples âmes* au XVe siècle: de Marguerite Porete (†1310) à Marguerite de Navarre." *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 4 (1999): 1347-1366; trans. Zan Kocher as "The Tradition of the Mirror of Simple Souls in the Fifteenth Century: From Marguerite Porete (†1310) to Marguerite of Navarre," forthcoming in *A Companion to Marguerite Porete and The Mirror of Simple Souls*, eds. Robert Stauffer and Wendy Terry (Leiden and Boston: Brill, forthcoming 2014), 1352.

for modern translations.<sup>14</sup> Robert Lerner made an even closer comparison between the works and confirmed Hasenohr's suggestion. But he also took it a step further by re-opening the discussion of the possibility that Michael Northburgh was the unknown translator of the *Mirouer*.<sup>15</sup>

Using the argument that M.N. used an older version of the manuscript — one more in line with the chapters found in the Valenciennes manuscript — Lerner traces a possible path from Hainaut, where Marguerite is thought to have resided, to the London Charterhouse, which owned at least one copy of the English *Mirror* by the third quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>16</sup> He expands upon Kirchberger's initial suggestion that the book might have traveled in the train of Philippa of Hainaut (1314-1369), who married Edward III (1312-1377) in England in 1327. One member of her train, Walter de Manny (1310-1372), a Valenciennes native, was also a co-founder of the London Charterhouse along with Michael Northburgh. Though neither man lived long enough to see the Charterhouse open its doors in 1371 and no record exists of the book being bequeathed to the Charterhouse, Lerner speculates that this is how the book came to be in the hands of the Carthusians.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Hasenohr 1359-1360.

<sup>15</sup> Lerner, "New Light," 103.

<sup>16</sup> The Oxford manuscript has an inscription that says that the book was a gift of Edmund Stouroure, a prior of the London Charterhouse from 1469-1477 (Doiron 244).

<sup>17</sup> Lerner, "New Light," 104-105.

Lerner does present the reasons why Kirchberger and nearly every scholar interested in the identity of M.N. since had doubted Northburgh's candidacy; namely that Northburgh seems to have no professional interest in works of contemplative spirituality — he was an Oxford canon of law — and that the language seems to belong to a later generation. He adds that the strongest objection “concerns doubts that anyone would have seen grounds for translating a spiritual treatise from French into English as early as roughly 1350.”<sup>18</sup> He knocks each argument away quite easily: we know little about Northburgh's personal interests; since no signature copy exists, the language may have been altered by a fifteenth-century scribe; and last, “there is always a first.”<sup>19</sup>

The trouble identifying M.N. as Michael Northburgh does not answer the bigger question, which is about the intention of the translator. Why would a cleric such as Northburgh, high in the hierarchy of the Church and a well-traveled man, translate a work of heresy — condemned just a half century earlier (at most) — into English, let alone be discovered studying the work and perpetuating its existence?

Nicholas Watson's argument is that the translator simply did not know this

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<sup>18</sup> Lerner, “New Light,” 106.

<sup>19</sup> Lerner, “New Light,” 106. I have been reminded of several works that were translated into English earlier than 1350, most notably the *Ayenbite of Inwyte*, a spiritual treatise that fits well with the kind of contemplative discussions that might have intrigued the type of person interested in Marguerite Porete's *Mirror*. This book was translated by Dan Michel of Northgate — another M.N. — and was taken from a French work called the *Somme le roi*, also known as the *Book of Vices and Virtues*. See Pamela Gradon, *Dan Michel's Ayenbite of Inwyte* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1.

was the condemned work,<sup>20</sup> but this argument does not hold up if Michael Northburgh is the translator. Another important factor to this argument is that M.N. writes in his prologue that this is his second time translating the *Mirouer*, because the first time he tried others found “mystakes” in it, although it is unclear whether he means that his readers did not understand, that there are sentiments in it that they found objectionable, or more simply that there were technical errors in his translation.<sup>21</sup> If M.N. knew that he needed to explain some of the more difficult passages, it seems that he would know that the book was at least in some danger of being misread or misused. The fact that M.N. had to be told to re-work his translation does not ring true for a cleric who had risen to the level of Bishop of London or one who had worked many years in France and the Low Countries in his early career.<sup>22</sup> It seems unlikely for a man with power and connections both in England and on the Continent to both not know about the condemnation of the *Mirouer* and to have to be told about the dangers of the work he was translating.

In the matter of the *Mirouer* possibly arriving in England with Philippa of Hainaut’s train, the fact that an older version of the text was used for M.N.’s translation is not necessarily an argument for the period in which the book was

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<sup>20</sup> Watson, “Melting,” 47.

<sup>21</sup> Doiron 247. “But now I am stired to laboure it agen newe, for bicause I am enfourmed þat some wordis þerof haue be mystake.” See also, Michael Sargent, “*Le Mirouer des simples ames* and the English Mystical Tradition,” *Abendländische Mystik im Mittelalter* ed. by Kurt Ruh (Stuttgart: Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1986), 446, for a discussion of the meaning of “mystake.”

<sup>22</sup> Sargent “English Mystical Tradition,” 444.



translated. The book may well have arrived in England as Lerner speculates, and may have languished from 1327 until later in the century. The Valenciennes manuscript is from the third quarter of the fifteenth century, but the language of the text clearly predates the creation of this copy.<sup>23</sup> In the various scenarios suggested for the transmission of the *Mirouer*, the most plausible would seem to be that a copy of the book may have remained forgotten in a library until it was rediscovered.

There are other possibilities for how the book may have arrived in England, possibilities that do not involve as much speculation. For example, the Carthusian order in England was growing throughout the fourteenth century. In 1368, England was made a separate province of the Carthusian order and several new houses, London among them, opened in the following forty years, culminating in the founding of Mount Grace (1398) and Perth (1423) Charterhouses.<sup>24</sup> The former is directly linked to the *Mirror* by the fact that Richard Methley (1450-1528), a Carthusian who lived and worked at Mount Grace, translated M.N.'s version of the *Mirror* into Latin there in 1491. Certainly a work harbored by the Carthusians may have come to England directly through their own order, but again the question is why.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the place and time period in England suggested by the linguistic studies on the translation, namely the north of

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<sup>23</sup> Hasenohr 1352.

<sup>24</sup> E. Margaret Thompson, *The Carthusian Order in England* (New York and Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1930), 133, 229, 246.

England – particularly Yorkshire – at the end of the fourteenth century, and to discuss the historical implications of the translation. By examining the historical and textual communities in England at the end of the fourteenth century, in addition to issues of spelling, word choice, and personal interest, a pattern can be discovered for the motivation of the translator.

I have limited the study to works popular or related to Yorkshire, mainly because it was a place of great spiritual and political upheaval throughout the second half of the fourteenth century. In the next chapter, I examine the textual traditions in Yorkshire, beginning with the English works of Richard Rolle (d. 1349), which dominated the period, mainly because they were works of contemplative spirituality, a genre normally written in Latin and reserved for male clergy, but in this case written in English and created for nuns and anchoresses.<sup>25</sup> He also wrote his autobiography, the *Incendium Amoris* and other works in Latin, which were later translated by Richard Misyn, prior of the Carmelites of Lincoln (d. 1462) in the 1430s. The translation of the *Incendium Amoris* appears in the Amherst manuscript (British Library MS Additional 37790) along with M.N.'s

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<sup>25</sup> His last three works in English – *Ego Dormio*, *The Commandment*, and *The Form of Living* – were addressed to the nuns of Hampole and Yedingham, and Margaret Kirkeby, a nun who would later move to Hampole to be closer to Rolle's resting place. She is thought to have been one of the people responsible for promoting his canonization and may have supplied some of the details for the Office constructed for him to help achieve that goal. See Hope Emily Allen, *Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, and Materials for his Biography* (New York: Modern Language Association of America: 1927), 52.

translation of the *Mirror*.<sup>26</sup> The next Yorkshire author to be discussed, John Thoresby, Archbishop of York (d. 1373) takes up the mantle of bringing works of devotion to the laity in English in order to create a bond between the laity and the clergy, and to create for the laity an understanding of the role of the clergy and why they should be supported. Last in the chapter is John Wyclif (d.1384), an Oxford-educated Yorkshireman who, among other things, suggested an English translation of the Bible in order to allow the laity to understand the Gospels on their own, rather than be subject to what he perceived as a growing ignorance and tyranny among the clergy. The controversies he stirred up would assist in the development of Lollardy, a heterodoxy not codified until 1395, but which became the target of heresy trials throughout England over the following century. A response to his questioning of Church authority shaped many of the works covered in this dissertation, including, I argue, M.N.'s translation of the *Mirror*. All three of these writers helped to shape the textual community that would grow in Yorkshire at the end of the fourteenth century in order to respond to these trends. The inclusion of the laity and the questioning of the Church's monopoly of works about religious life became the focus of texts produced in Yorkshire at the end of the fourteenth century. It is my contention that M.N.'s motivations are bound in each of these movements that shaped the Yorkshire writers discussed in the next chapter. His work reflects not only the inclusion of the laity in the pursuit

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<sup>26</sup> This mid-fifteenth century manuscript contains several of Rolle's works, the short version of Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*, Jan van Ruusbroec's *Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God*, as well as several shorter works. It is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 below.

of the life of contemplation, but also the concern with heresy when encouraging such a life for the Latin-illiterate laity and female religious.

The third chapter considers the response of a Yorkshire circle of writers to the writers from Chapter 2, centered on then-Archbishop of York, Thomas Arundel (1353-1414), a man who would go on to become the Archbishop of Canterbury and to have a profound influence on the determination and punishment of heresy into the fifteenth century. The chapter focuses on four writers and works connected with M.N.'s translation of the *Mirror*: Walter Hilton (d. 1396); the anonymous authors of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Chastising of God's Children*; and Nicholas Love (d. 1424).<sup>27</sup> These writers provide a spectrum of responses to the proliferation of interest in the life of contemplation by employing writings formerly reserved for the most learned of contemplative men – works thought to be by Bonaventure such as the *Stimulus Amoris* or the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, or works thought to be by the apostle Dionysius the Areopagite. At the same time, they guided Latin-illiterate readers through these more difficult thoughts on contemplation in order to keep them away from

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<sup>27</sup> Walter Hilton, an Augustinian canon, is credited as author of several treatises all thought to date to the last two decades of the fourteenth century, including: the two books of the *Scale of Perfection*, *Angels' Song*, and the *Mixed Life*, as well as several letters and translations. The author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* (which is believed to be from the end of the fourteenth century) is also credited with *The Book of Privy Counselling*, *The Epistle of Prayer*, *The Epistle of Discretion*, and the translations of Pseudo-Dionysius's *Mystical Theology* (called *Deonise Hid Divinite*) and Richard of St. Victor's *Benjamin Minor*. Nicholas Love, who served as the prior of Mount Grace Charterhouse in the first two decades of the fifteenth century, is noted for his translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi* known as *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, which received the approbation of Thomas Arundel's *Constitutions* in 1410.

potential dangers elaborated by men like John Wyclif and members of the Lollard movement that followed. By examining how Hilton, Love, and the two anonymous authors edited and elaborated various passages throughout their translations and how they addressed their audiences (either lay or in the lower orders), a reflection of their concerns can be identified and their motivations revealed. From the evidence of their motivations, the relationship M.N. has with these writers is made clear, demonstrating that he belongs with this group at the end of the fourteenth century, rather than being classified as a lone translator writing earlier in the century.

The fourth chapter is a three-part analysis of the translator's lexical choices: first in how he chooses to gloss the *Mirror*, second in how he edited the text, and third in how the book was compiled with other works. M.N. makes his own intrusions into the text of the *Mirror* as clear as possible by placing his explanations of the difficult passages between his initials. Seen in light of the fear that readers are not being given the authentic words of Biblical and contemporary theological texts or that once-orthodox texts have been imbued with Lollard philosophies, this technique points to specific concerns of the late fourteenth century.<sup>28</sup> The first part of this chapter examines the prologue and glosses that

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<sup>28</sup> Michael P. Kuczynski, "Rolle Among the Reformers: Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in Wycliffite Copies of Richard Rolle's *English Psalter*," *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England* ed. William F. Pollard and Robert Boenig (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 85. As an epigram for the article Kuczynski quotes a prologue added to Rolle's *Psalter*: "Copeyed has this Sauter ben, of yuel men of lollardry;/And aftirward hit has bene sene, ymppyed in with eresye./ They seyden then to leude foles, that it shuld be all enter, /A blessed boke of hur scoles, of Richard Hampole the Sauter" (from the Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 286).

M.N. adds to his work for the benefit of his readers, among whom he numbers “comune peple.” Though some scholars have speculated that M.N.’s translation was specifically created for the training of a contemplative clergy, his inclusion of a non-clerical readership, the aforementioned “comune peple,” demonstrates the expectation of a wider audience, and while each of the only extant copies of the manuscript belonged at one time to Carthusian monasteries, others outside of the monks may have had the opportunity, or the need, for guidance through this very difficult theology.<sup>29</sup>

The second part of the chapter compares the two chapters Hasenohr discovered in the Valenciennes manuscript with M.N.’s translation and the Chantilly manuscript in order to convey a better understanding of the differences among the three versions of the text. We cannot be sure at this time that M.N.

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Kuczinski warns that not all that seems to be infused with Lollard sympathies may be of Lollard construction, simply because the line between what is Lollard and what is orthodox was not clear, especially to the translators and copyists of the day.

<sup>29</sup> Marleen Cré speculates that even the order of the texts suggest that the Amherst anthology was used as training manual for men new to the life of contemplation: “Whatever his principles of selection, the anthology is a homogenous collection of texts in which the authors describe their experience of contemplation and teach their readers about the contemplative life. This suggests some process of selection, perhaps even some process of ordering of the texts in the anthology. *The Mending of Life*, the most systematically didactic text, opens the anthology; Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror*, the most speculative text, comes at the end. As the anthology progresses, the complexity of the texts increase.” See Marleen Cré, “Women in the Charterhouse? Julian of Norwich’s *Revelations of Divine Love* and Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror of Simple Souls* in British Library, MS Additional 37790,” *Writing Religious Women* eds. Denis Reveney and Christiania Whitehead (Cardiff, University of Wales Press: 2000), 50. Though M.N.’s *Mirror* comes last in the text, and so by Cré’s thinking is the most difficult, it was still seen as a work that a novice could work through.

made all of the changes that occur in his translation – some of them may have appeared in the edition of the text from which he made his translation – but he does warn his readers in the translator’s prologue that “summe wordis neden to be chaunged or it wole fare vngoodli, not acordynge to þe sentence.”<sup>30</sup> Though we only have the two chapters in the Valenciennes manuscript with which to make this three-way comparison, there is some evidence that the changes made in the translation reflect concerns of the times as witnessed by the other writers in the Yorkshire circle and M.N.’s own glosses. The fact that these two chapters of the *Mirouer* were hidden in Hugh of St. Victor’s *De arrha animae* in the Valenciennes manuscript offers some insight into how Marguerite Porete’s *Mirouer* proliferated even after its initial condemnation and the condemnations it received in the fourteenth century.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Doiron 249.

<sup>31</sup> Others on the Continent recognized the value of the *Mirouer*. Jean Gerson used Marguerite Porete (or Marie of Valenciennes, as he calls her) as an example of a woman whose pride kept her from the truth in his 1401 treatise, *De Distinctione Verarum Visionum a Falsis*, and yet says that if she had “not applied the love of which she wrote to those who are wanderers on earth, bound to fulfill God’s commands, but instead to the state of the blessed, she could hardly have expressed anything more sublime about their enjoyment of God” (Brian Patrick McGuire [trans.], *Jean Gerson: Early Works* [New York: Paulist Press, 1998], 357). Hasenohr also describes how the *Mirror* was altered to create other manuals of learning for young women, particularly a pair of texts called *The Discipline of Divine Love* (*La discipline d’amour divine*) and *The Meaning of the Discipline of Divine Love* (*La leçon de la disciple d’amour divine*) by an anonymous Celestine monk in the 1470s, although the books have changed much of the message of the original. Hasenohr writes: “The Celestine monk’s book takes on its true meaning only in relation to Marguerite Porete’s treatise: having recognized the [*Mirouer*’s] attractive and risky qualities alike, but considering himself incapable of succeeding at the kind of interpretation that its depth and subtlety would require for safe reading, [the monk] undertakes to set forth a substitute in the guise of an

The third and final section examines the construction of the three extant manuscripts of the *Mirror*. The composition of the Amherst manuscript (British Library MS Additional 37790) offers evidence of how the translation of the *Mirror* was used in the fifteenth century embedded in a new textual context. The inclusion of several works by Rolle provides an English context, while shorter pieces from the works of Jan van Ruusbroec, Henry Suso, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Bridget of Sweden demonstrate a Continental interest that defies Nicholas Watson's hypothesis about "insularity."<sup>32</sup> The Oxford copy of the *Mirror* is bound with one of the books examined in Chapter 3, the *Chastising of God's Children*, which seems to be an attempt at cautioning would-be readers of the *Mirror*, while

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antidote. So he keeps its terminology, at least in part; and [also] its framework, which he systematizes, divides, and subdivides. But he removes its original contents, except for making brief and sporadic borrowings from them, carefully filtered through conventional teaching that he intends to substitute for them, with an approach that is much more ascetic than mystical" (Hasenohr 1350-1351). Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549) also makes reference to Marguerite Porete in her poem, *The Prisons*. See Claire Lynch Wade (trans.), *Marguerite de Navarre Les Prisons: A French and English Edition* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1989), 63. Despite condemnation and re-condemnation, there was some merit seen in the *Mirouer* that persists for many centuries.

<sup>32</sup> Watson concludes three things about M.N. and his knowledge of the book he was translating: 1) M.N. was translating solely for his colleagues, who Watson assumes to be some group of cloistered monks; 2) M.N. was concerned that the book might travel beyond the confines of the monastery; and 3) M.N. had no idea of the history of the manuscript he was translating. "Far from testifying to the cosmopolitan nature of English writers and readers, and their wide knowledge of the controversies surrounding mystical writing on the continent, the *Mirror* evokes an Insular environment which was still firmly local, even parochial, and to which news of such controversies never penetrated: one in which the work could be read without any of the aura of fear and suspicion with which Colledge and Guarnieri try to surround it" (Watson, "Melting," 37).



at the same time providing a copy of the controversial work.<sup>33</sup> The Cambridge edition of the *Mirror*, though it is not coupled with any other text is the one that seems the most reliable, as it, according to Marilyn Doiron, “after close examination had shown that it represents the original translation more accurately and reliably than do the other two [...]”<sup>34</sup>

By examining the context as well as M.N.’s actual work as a translator and guide, the motivations that led M.N. to translate the *Mirouer* become clearer. While the context does not reveal the identity of the person behind the initials, the similarities in motivation, style, and language alone demonstrate that M.N. and his work belong to the end of the fourteenth century and therefore excludes Michael Northburgh from the contenders. By linking the translation of the *Mirror* to the works of the Yorkshire circle, beyond linguistics and translation, some light is shone on the history of spiritual contemplation in a post-Wyclif world.

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<sup>33</sup> Though the *Chastising*’s warnings are not limited to the *Mirror* itself, there are several points that address many of the similar points M.N. addresses in his glosses, as shall be described in Chapter 3.

<sup>34</sup> Doiron 245.

## Chapter 2

### THE ORIGINS OF THE YORKSHIRE CIRCLE

During the last quarter of the fourteenth century, the combination of three movements in devotional writing, represented in this chapter by three specific Yorkshire writers and their works, resulted in a perceived need for English translations of several controversial mystical works. They are: the eremitic movement represented by Richard Rolle (d.1349); the movement toward writing for the laity represented by Archbishop of York, John Thoresby (d.1373) and his *Lay Folks' Catechism* (written about 1357); and a heterodox movement which challenged several key traditions of the Church, represented by John Wyclif (d.1384) and his followers. While none of the three movements was unique to the fourteenth century or Yorkshire — or even England — the combination of the three created a “textual community” or perhaps several “textual communities,” that centered on a relationship between active members of the Church who made works of contemplation available to a Latin-illiterate audience, works that previously had been reserved for clergymen who had sought refuge from society in lives of deep contemplation.<sup>35</sup> By the last quarter of the fourteenth century, the

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<sup>35</sup> Brian Stock describes “textual communities” in this way: “The minimal requirement was just one literate, the *interpretes*, who understood a set of texts and was able to pass his message on verbally to others. By a process of absorption and reflection the behavioral norms of the group’s other members were eventually altered.” See Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 23. I use the term in a slightly different manner, with the idea that there were several groups of readers or listeners (auditors, a term used by M.N. and several of the other writers discussed in this dissertation) clamoring for works on the theme of contemplation that could be achieved (or at least momentarily enjoyed) even during an active life. In this case, the “textual

monopoly that contemplatives held on works of mystical theology was being challenged by scholars and groups of religious women and Latin-illiterate clergy of more active orders, demonstrated by the demand for translations of many older works and the creation of several new ones that helped shepherd an audience outside of the cloister.<sup>36</sup> The Yorkshire circle of writers, including M.N., the translator of Marguerite Porete's condemned *Mirror of Simple Souls*, attempted to carefully negotiate the demands of the men and women who stood at the confluence of these three movements without sacrificing their roles as orthodox

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community" is centered on a group of writers who translated works to help their Latin illiterate authors accomplish this, both by the literal act of re-casting words from a foreign language into a language that could be understood by their audiences, and by the act of re-casting words written for a learned and cloistered audience into a language that could be understood by those who lived outside the world of the cloister.

<sup>36</sup> Works by authors from previous centuries who specialized in mystical theology – Dionysius the Areopagite from the sixth century (*Mystical Theology*); Guigo II, the ninth prior of the Carthusians who died in 1193 (*The Ladder of Four Rungs*); James of Milan, a thirteenth century Franciscan (*The Goad – or Pricking – of Love*); just to name a few – were translated into English in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Many Continental religious women from earlier times – Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179), Marie d'Oignies (1177-1213), Christina Mirabilis (d. 1224), Elizabeth of Spalbeek (d.1316), for example – found a new audience in English vernacular readers at the end of fourteenth century. Clearly, there was an interest among the Latin-illiterate for works that detailed the contemplative life at this time. By the first quarter of the fifteenth century the Brigittine nuns at Syon Abbey and the nuns of Barking spent at least part of their daily devotions in reading translated theological works. Rebecca Krug describes how Sibyl Felton, the abbess of Barking, distributed books at least once a year to the nuns there starting in 1404. One of her nuns, Matilda Newton, became the first abbess of Syon Abbey in 1415, although she was removed by 1417, by the order of the king for unknown reasons. Krug speculates that she was angered by the additions made to Bridget of Sweden's rule by the Swedish prior Peter Olafson, which gave the nuns several new domestic responsibilities (like baking) that might have taken away time from their studies. See Rebecca Krug, *Reading Families: Women's Literate Practice in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 163-165.

guides and leaders of the Church.

Before I begin with the writers I have chosen to represent these three movements, the terms I have used to describe these movements, as well as the terms for the active and contemplative lives, require further explanation.

Perhaps the best voice for the eremitic life in England in the fourteenth century was Richard Rolle.<sup>37</sup> In four English epistles and a translation of the Psalter, he expanded the possibilities for the life of contemplation and meditation for non-Latinate religious. His works became particularly popular among non-contemplative clergy and lay readers by the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

Rolle's English works extend knowledge of the contemplative life beyond the traditional members of the well educated clergy to the religious women he wrote for by explaining to them that they do not require the reading of many books in order to achieve the contemplative life. The possibility of following this life will be later expanded to the laity as well in Walter Hilton's *Mixed Life*. So

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<sup>37</sup> Much of what we know about Rolle's life as an Oxford student who left the university, borrowed robes from his sister and a hood from his father, and began his life as a hermit in the wilds around Hampole, not far from York, is told in the *Office* that was written possibly as late as the 1380s. Rolle's ideas for being a solitary included the roles of both teacher and preacher. According to the *Office* written for him it was in these roles that he found his first patron, John Dalton, and the beginning of his English writing career. The complete *Office of Richard Hermit* remains in three manuscripts (Allen lists three complete – Bodl. E Musaeo 193 (Sum. Cat. No. 3610), ff. 3v-34; B. Mus. Cotton Tiber. A. xv. ff. 191-194; and Lincoln Cath. 209, ff. 2-13 – and one partial that was owned by the Brigittine house at Vadstena – Upsala Univ. C. 621, ff. 103-105 – all from the late fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century. It contains nine readings about Rolle, but selections of the readings appear in other manuscripts from as far away as Vadstena, the home of the Brigittine order. Allen suggests that this may indicate a direct connection with Syon Abbey (Allen 53).

<sup>38</sup> This is discussed in more detail in section 1 of this chapter.

while the contemplative life was previously reserved for solitary or cenobitic clergy, the value of contemplation was beginning to be explored by men and women without extensive education and sometimes without holy orders.<sup>39</sup> This distinction between the contemplative life and the role of contemplation is important to an understanding of Rolle's effect on the Yorkshire writers at the end of the century.<sup>40</sup>

The next movement, writing for the laity, can be seen best in the versions of the *Lay Folks' Catechism*, a book much like the *Ayenbite of Inwyte* in that it contains explanations of prayers, explanations of the Seven Deadly Sins, the

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<sup>39</sup> Hughes discusses how the contemplative life became part of the lives of unlearned anchorites. He argues that this can be established in how anchorites of both genders are recorded in episcopal registers kept by Archbishop Thoresby starting in 1357. Hughes distinguishes between anchorites who were encouraged to live an ascetic life and the ones shepherded by Rolle who were encouraged to include contemplation. "In the epistles of Rolle and his followers, the recluse is seen as a contemplative as well as an ascetic, for whom the purgative process was only a beginning, and for whom a union with God is envisaged and expressed in explicit, joyful terms" See Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1988), 84.

<sup>40</sup> A discussion of the delineation between the active and contemplative lives first appears in England in Dan Michel's translation of the *Ayenbite of Inwyte*, a book translated from the French *Somme le Roi* in 1340. The book serves as a guide to understanding the commandments, the sacraments, the seven deadly sins, as well as a breakdown of several prayers like the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria*. The distinction between the two lives appears in a discussion on chastity and uses the popular images of Martha and Mary from Luke's account of Christ's visit as symbols of the two lives, an image employed since Gregory's writing on the subject, even by Marguerite Porete. The *Somme le Roi* would also be the basis for the *Speculum Vitae* of William of Nassington (d. 1354), a popular administrator in the York area and friend to William Zouche, Archbishop of York (d. 1352). (Gradon, Vol. 1, 2; 199-200)

sacraments, the acts of mercy, and so forth.<sup>41</sup> The Latin version of the *Catechism* and the commission for the English version of it is ascribed to John Thoresby, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1373). The vernacular tradition had been growing throughout Europe, and certainly has roots before the fourteenth century, but Thoresby began a program specifically targeted at educating the laity of England in order to protect the Church's role in society. The important thing to note here is that this does not mean that Thoresby was expecting the laity of Yorkshire to sit and read his *Catechism* alone, but rather expected the priests of his community to teach the words to their congregations regularly — every Sunday, which was an improvement on the original order of four times a year dictated by Archbishop John Pecham in the previous century — in a way that they could keep in mind.<sup>42</sup> The *Catechism* is written in a poetic form that is short and easy to remember and spells out in plain language the most important things for every Christian to know

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<sup>41</sup> There is some controversy about several versions of the manuscript and how it may have been altered with the insertion of “Lollard material,” a matter complicated by questions about what was considered orthodox at the time. Anne Hudson lists more than twenty manuscripts that contain one version or the other of at least parts of the *Lay Folks' Catechism*. Anne Hudson, “A New Look at the ‘Lay Folks’ Catechism’” *Viator* 16 (1985): 243.

<sup>42</sup> This speaks directly to Brian Stock's idea of a textual community in that it is not necessary to believe that everyone in this community read the words, but rather that they knew them. Stock writes: “Wherever there are texts that are read aloud or silently, there are groups of listeners that can potentially profit from them. A natural process of education takes place within the group, and, if the force of the word is strong enough, it can supersede the differing economic and social backgrounds of the participants, welding them, for a time at least, into a unit” (Stock 150). Thoresby was hoping to re-unite the clerical and lay folk by creating an understanding between them that would transcend class and type of life in order to stop the violence that was perpetrated during his time in York. This is discussed in greater detail in section 2 of this chapter.

about their faith.<sup>43</sup> The idea of creating easily memorized translations of religious works, especially in a catechistic form, can help us to understand how further spiritual works of contemplation may have spread to an uneducated (or less educated) laity. The translations of texts like *Scala Claustralium*,<sup>44</sup> and even the *Mirror*, contain easily memorized steps and poems (or, possibly, songs) that seem to be directed at making the texts more available to a listening audience. The works prepared for the laity were not necessarily owned by the laity or read directly by them, but could be used by spiritual guides to educate those who desired to learn more about devotion and contemplation.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Nolloth writes: “In his anxiety to amend the ignorance and neglect of the parish-priests, and the consequent godlessness of their flocks, the Archbishop [Thoresby] put forth the Catechism printed in this volume. It was issued both in Latin and English, -- the latter of the simplest character, so as to be understood by the most uncultured of the laity.” See Thomas Frederick Simmons and Henry Edward Nolloth, *The Lay Folks’ Catechism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1901), xv (hereafter called *Lay Folks’ Catechism*). While it does not rhyme, the text is put forth rhythmically and simply covering difficult theological concepts such as the trinity and the meanings of prayers.

<sup>44</sup> A work created by Guigo II (d.1193), the ninth prior of the Grande Chartreuse, for the benefit of his cloistered contemplatives, which defines how the four rungs of his ladder to Heaven – reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation – may be used to achieve a union with God. While his work was written for a specific cleric (Brother Gervase), the book became popular and was translated into English and appears in three fifteenth-century manuscripts (Cambridge University Library Ff. vi. 33, Bodleian Library Douce 322, and British Museum Harleian 1706) The book was translated to be more didactic in its teaching as if for an audience that was not as well educated as the audience for which it was intended. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (trans.), *The Ladder of Monks and Twelve Meditations* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1981), 25-26.

<sup>45</sup> Evidence in the various texts suggests that many of the writers discussed in this dissertation expected their audience to be listeners as well as readers. For example, in his glosses to Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror*, M.N. calls on the “auditoures of þis boke” (in his first gloss – Doiron 251). It is clear that there was

The third movement, the heterodox movement, is represented here by John Wyclif, but also by two challenges to orthodoxy that would each be condemned in the fifteenth century: Lollardy and Free Spiritism. While most of Wyclif's catalogue of treatises still exists, a full picture of how the various heterodox thoughts – Lollardy, a heresy thought to stem directly from Wyclif's writings, and Free Spiritism, a Continental heresy – were transmitted remains in the shadows of the hysteria that would result in many of the trials and burnings of the fifteenth century. While the beliefs and challenges that coalesced into the *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* and were read in the parliament of 1395 appear to make Lollardy clearer to history, the definition of what Lollards believe and whether Free Spiritism ever reached England at all is still debated.<sup>46</sup> It is the response to Wyclif's writings and the two nebulous heresies that is an important factor in understanding the imperative that compelled the Yorkshire circle to write, and I contend, M.N. to create his translation of the *Mirror*.

Though many of Wyclif's more controversial thoughts on the translation of the Bible and transubstantiation were written in Latin, the Oxford debates in which he participated during the 1370s on these matters became public thanks to

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an expectation (either by the author or the editor of works like the *Mirror*) that cloistered silent readers were not the only people who had access to the book's contents. This may also explain much of the repetitiveness in the *Mirror* and other books produced by the Yorkshire circle.

<sup>46</sup> See Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 391-394. Kerby-Fulton chronicles the muddle created by Wycliffism, Free Spiritism, female preaching, inclusivist salvation, visionaries, Spiritual Franciscans, apocalypticism, and so on. It can be difficult to separate them as is seen in the discussion of the *Chastising of God's Children* in Chapter 3, section three.



the publication in English of his “thirty-three conclusions” in a treatise called *De Civili Dominio*, of which only the Latin versions still exist.<sup>47</sup> In his conclusions, Wyclif declares that the Church is unfit for the authority of God because as a whole the Church hierarchy lives in mortal sin as they do not live in poverty. As a result, all of the sacraments are called into question, particularly the Eucharist and confession – for how can men who will be condemned in the after life forgive sins or consecrate anything? The fact that he thought to conduct this discussion in the vernacular demonstrates another of Wyclif’s central tenets: the right of all the people to participate in theological discussions. Combined with Thoresby’s interest in educating the laity, Wyclif and the movement that followed him may have a great deal to do with the publication of so many important works of theology in English at this time.

Because Wyclif serves as the contemporary writer who questioned the roles of priests and the contemplative life, the power of the sacraments, and the rights of temporal powers within the Church, his work is often considered to be the theological underpinnings of the Lollard heresy, despite the fact that he is just one of a long line of men within the Church in the century previous to him to

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<sup>47</sup> Steven Justice writes, “As the *De Veritate Sacre Scripture* [Wyclif’s treatise on the laws of Christ] makes clear, he [Wyclif] used vernacular publication strategically: ‘Since I wanted this matter made clear to clergy and laity alike, I gathered and communicated thirty-three conclusions concerning this matter in both languages’[...] and he [Wyclif] says that they circulated ‘through a great part of England and christendom, all the way to the Roman curia.’” See Steven Justice, “Lollardy” *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 666-667.

question clerical policies.<sup>48</sup> While not all of Wyclif's stances were condemned at the time of his writing, he would become the specter of anti-clericalism and his name would become synonymous with Lollardy during the fifteenth century.<sup>49</sup>

Whether Wyclif's writings were a cause or merely a coincidentally timed connection to the Lollard movement, the fact that the two gained prominence at roughly the same time in their respective quarters – Wyclif's writing within the university setting and the Lollard movement without – certainly had serious repercussions among the members of the Church hierarchy in the last two decades of the fourteenth century, but it was not until the fifteenth century that the Lollards were subject to the death penalty.<sup>50</sup> Wyclif's followers – fellow Oxford

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<sup>48</sup> Peter John Olivi (d. 1298) and William of Occam (d. 1348), for example, had already been condemned on the Continent – the former posthumously and the latter was forced into exile – for similar questions about the need to separate clerical powers from temporal powers. Both Occam and Olivi were condemned for calling upon the Church to return to an impoverished life in likeness to Christ's own life. Historians have suggested that the persecution of the "Spiritual" Franciscans, who believed, among other things, that the priesthood should live in poverty, may have reached England in the first half of the fourteenth century. See Kerby-Fulton 74-76.

<sup>49</sup> The Council of Constance (1414-1417) condemned Wyclif and all of his teachings, demanding that the English Church dig up his bones and burn them, an order that was not fulfilled until 1428 (see note 107).

<sup>50</sup> Steven Justice addresses the question of whether the university movement or lay movement came first with the case of William Smith, an iconoclast and self-taught "reformer" from the 1380s who seems to predate Wyclif's or his Lollard follower's beliefs. Justice sums up the story by saying: "But this coincidence of belief, along with the support Smith received from the knights, has several implications. First, Lollardy could create networks and alliances across divisions of social status. Second, by the mid-1380s Lollardy was an obvious object of allegiance for such an unaffiliated, idiosyncratic reformer as Smith presumably was. And third, some of the most important and enduring Lollard tenets – such as the objection to images – entered Lollardy by means of its lay rather than its

men like Philip Repingdon and Nicholas Hereford among them – were chastised and excommunicated by the Church in 1382, but Repingdon was allowed to return to service after recanting and would later become one of the strongest advocates in the anti-Lollard movement. Hereford ended his days as a Carthusian at Coventry, though he was forbidden to preach.<sup>51</sup> There was considerable question as to what Lollardy fully stood for in the last two decades of the fourteenth century, until the *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* was presented in the parliament of 1395, expressing clearly their anti-clerical and anti-sacramental interests.<sup>52</sup> This made the movement a much more identifiable target for Thomas

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clerical adherents” (Justice 670). Lollardy seems to be a mixture of Wyclif’s theological assessments and the ideas that created such political events as the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381. The two are inextricably tangled making it difficult to say which was influenced by which.

<sup>51</sup> By 1394, Repingdon was the abbot of St. Mary-in-the-Meadows; by 1400 he was the chancellor of Oxford; and by 1404 he became bishop of Lincoln, a position he held until he resigned in 1418. “Repingdon showed great and serious dedication to his episcopal duties. Arundel even said of him that ‘noo bischop of þis londe pursueþ now scharplier hem þat holden þat wei [i.e. the Lollards] than he doiþ’” See Siegfried Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections from Later Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 51. Hereford was also excommunicated and appealed to Rome, but was imprisoned there only to escape in 1385 and return to England under the protection of the king (Kerby-Fulton xliii-xlv).

<sup>52</sup> Up until this point there were Wyclif’s original thirty-three conclusions, published in *De Civili Dominio* (1375-1376) – published in both English and Latin – nineteen of which were condemned by Gregory XI in 1377, a matter that went unresolved until the Council of Constance. The publication of the *Twelve Conclusions*, which do not match completely with Wyclif’s conclusions, made clear the tenets the Lollards followed. The *Conclusions* contain attacks on both the Church and the Crown, addressing not only the sacraments of the Eucharist, Holy Orders, and Confession; the celibacy of the priesthood; the need for pilgrimage and prayers for the dead; and exorcisms, but also the right of priests to hold secular office, the right of men to go to war, the right of women to have

Arundel, in both his ecclesiastic position as Archbishop of Canterbury and his political position as Chancellor of England, and helped him to pass *De Heretico Comburendo* (1401), a secular proclamation which allowed for relapsed heretics to be executed by burning, and later the *Constitutions* (1410), an ecclesiastic measure which ensured that all theological writings had to pass through the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury for approval. The success of this measure is still debated, but its implementation demonstrates a concern of Lollard infiltration even in the transmission of orthodox works.<sup>53</sup>

But Lollardy may not have been the only heterodoxy that the English Church had to deal with by the turn of the fifteenth century. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton has suggested that the Continental Heresy of the Free Spirit may also have appeared on the shores of England by this time, and may have been the subject of

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abortions, and the power of various crafts and guilds that participate in making weapons and armor. See Anne Hudson, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1997), 24-29.

<sup>53</sup> Though we only have one book with approbations under the *Constitutions* – Nicholas Love’s *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* – Nicholas Watson maintains that the censorship provided by this measure was enough to slow the production of new theological works. Watson argues that no new works of spiritual guidance, like the ones that will be discussed in the next chapter, appear during the century after the *Constitutions* were issued. See Nicholas Watson, “Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel’s Constitutions of 1409,” *Speculum*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Oct. 1995), 822-864. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, among others, has since questioned the power of the *Constitutions* over what was written in the fifteenth century. She notes: “The truth is that effective ‘censorship,’ as we understand it, was ultimately impossible, indeed, in any absolute sense an impractical task in the age before print” (Kerby-Fulton 17).

persecution as early as the 1380s.<sup>54</sup> Free Spiritism, in short, is the belief that one may become unified with God during one's life in such a way that no action taken by the body of a person in such a state can be attributed to that person's soul, but only to God, and so is exempt from "moral law."<sup>55</sup> As Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer des Simples Ames* expresses similar sentiments, modern scholars have often associated it with Free Spiritism, and therefore its very presence in England might be seen as an example of the heresy's arrival in England. Robert Lerner maintains that the language used to disavow Free Spiritism was employed by English Churchmen to attack Lollardy, and that subtle adjustments made in works

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<sup>54</sup> Kerby-Fulton offers several reasons why English ecclesiastics were aware of the Free Spirit heresy, most notably because there were already warnings about "Liberty of Spirit" in works designed for female religious, particularly in the *Chastising of God's Children*, an anonymous work written in the last quarter of the fourteenth century as advice to female religious to aid in the contemplative life (Kerby-Fulton 261-263). Nicholas Watson argues that the English were isolated from Continental theology and would not know anything about the condemnation of Porete and the *Mirouer*. The argument centers on the question of why a monk, presumably a Carthusian would have translated a known work of heresy. Watson argues that M.N. simply could not have known in direct challenge to Colledge's assertion that the *Mirouer's* condemnation would have been known even in England (Watson "Melting," 24-25). Kerby-Fulton suggests that the second *Mirror* is translated specifically to address M.N.'s earlier accidental translation of a work that promotes Free Spiritism. She writes, "It seems entirely possible that, although M.N. knew neither [Grote's Latin translation of Ruusbroec's attacks on the heresy and the *Chastising of God's Children*] when he first did the translation, one or more of his Carthusian colleagues or contacts did and brought this to bear on their reading of the new translation" (Kerby-Fulton 284).

<sup>55</sup> Robert Lerner defines Free Spiritism this way: "Free Spirits believed that they could attain union with God on earth, but they thought that they could only reach this state by means of bodily austerities and spiritual abnegation and that attainment of the state resulted in detachment from daily concerns rather than in a radical engagement in them." See Robert Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 3.

originally designed to fight Free Spiritism demonstrate adaptations made to fight the English heresy rather than any concern for the Continental one, but the matter is still debated.<sup>56</sup> While no one suggests that M.N. translated the *Mirror* in order to perpetuate Free Spiritism in England, I maintain that he might have been attempting to defang a book that had already become available to the Latin-illiterate (possibly by his own hand) by addressing the several points for which the *Mirror* had been linked to this foreign heresy and explaining them in an orthodox manner. Perhaps this is the trepidation M.N. shows in his prologue and why he has been commissioned to create this new version of the translation.

It is important to note that the dichotomy between orthodoxy and heterodoxy is not clear-cut, and this is a question made more dire by the fact that there is a new audience reading works that at least would have been confined in earlier times when reading was restricted to those who knew Latin. It is the question of where that line should be drawn between orthodoxy and heterodoxy for this wider audience that is important to the Yorkshire circle of writers in their attempts to shepherd their less educated flock among the more difficult works of

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<sup>56</sup> Robert Lerner writes that England was not aware of the Free-Spirit heresy. He writes: “The clearest indication that there was no Free-Spirit movement in England comes from the English translation of Ruysbroeck’s *Adornment* (ca. 1382), which recasts the attacks on false mystics to make them apply to followers of Wyclif” (Lerner, *Free Spirit*, 195, n. 46). Kerby-Fulton addresses Lerner’s issue by demonstrating that “Medieval churchmen condemned opinions by reference to established heresies[...]

 (Kerby-Fulton 263) and a detailed discussion of the *Chastising* and how it was used, as is seen in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

theology and devotion that were becoming available at this time.<sup>57</sup>

In many ways, the circle of Yorkshire writers that are the focus of Chapter 3, who began their writing in the last two decades of the fourteenth century, were founded in the convergence of the works of these three movements – the eremitic, the vernacular, and the reaction against heterodox literature. Rolle’s eremiticism and Thoresby’s desire to teach the Latin-illiterate would lead to wholesale translation of works of contemplation in the last quarter of the fourteenth century (I suggest the *Mirror* among them), but these two trends were altered by the third trend created by Wyclif and his followers, which began to bend this interest in translation to the advantage of the Wycliffites. In this chapter I examine these three trends and how they grew together to create a demand for the translation of Continental contemplative works that seem to be the true harbor for the first, and more dangerous, of M.N.’s translations of Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror*. The next chapter focuses on the Yorkshire circle’s response to these challenges and how they temper these three movements to try and restore the line between orthodoxy and heresy by creating a new series of texts, based on older works, but designed to address the perils created by these three trends.

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<sup>57</sup> Hudson discusses the difficulties of sorting out the intentions of a scribe, and her analysis leads her to believe that either the scribe was confused about the Lollard material in the manuscript he was using as a source or it just did not register with the scribe that these were important issues that could result in a charge of heresy. Either way, the fifteenth century understanding of what was considered heresy seems to have not been important to all before Arundel’s decrees and the punishment associated with certain beliefs (Hudson, “A New Look,” 258).

## 1. Richard Rolle

Richard Rolle had a profound impact on the Yorkshire writers of the latter half of the century: he developed contemplative writing in English for an audience of women who lacked the education required to read the older spiritual fathers like Augustine and the Victorines Hugh and Richard.<sup>58</sup> Though Rolle's writings were not always received in a positive way by the Yorkshire circle, as exhibited by both Hilton's and the *Cloud*-author's responses to Rolle's description of the physical manifestations of his ecstasies, his understanding of the solitary life and his desire to teach religious women opened the way for the later writers to address both in a practical manner.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) and Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) served at the Abbey of St. Victor, an Augustinian monastery in Paris, and each wrote works of mysticism that were popular into the fifteenth century. Hugh's *De Arrha Animae* and Richard's *Benjamin Minor* were both influential in the Yorkshire circle.

<sup>59</sup> Walter Hilton points out in Chapter 44 of the first book of the *Scale of Perfection* that if anyone, whether or not they have experienced the physical manifestations described by Rolle, asks forgiveness of God, they shall be saved. John Clark and Rosemary Dorward note that when Hilton speaks against "the sayings of certain holy men," which claim that only those who love the name of Jesus and experience the "wonderful sweetness" in this life will be saved, that he is referring to Rolle's *In Aliquot Versus Cantici Canticorum*. See John P. H. Clark and Rosemary Dorward (trans.), *The Scale of Perfection*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 173 note 176. In the *Cloud of Unknowing*, the author is more specific in Chapter 48 when he says: "Bot alle other counfortes, sounes, and gladnes, and swetnes, that comyn fro with-oute sodenly, and thou wost never whens, I prey thee have hem suspecte. For thei mowe be bothe good and yvel; wrought by a good aungel, yif thei ben good, and by an yvel aungel, yif thei ben yvel" (Patrick J. Gallacher, [ed.], *The Cloud of Unknowing*, [Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997] ll.1698-1701, <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/cloufrm.htm>). Though neither mention Rolle by name, and, as John Clark points out, neither "would have classed Rolle as a 'heretic,'" there is a worry about the discernment of such manifestations among the unlearned that the Yorkshire authors address. See J. P. H. Clark, "Walter Hilton and 'Liberty of



In the introduction to his edition of Rolle's *Emendatio vitae*, Nicholas Watson examines the four groups of literature that he argues helped define the relationship between God and the individual in the twelfth and thirteenth century — meditational works, works that draw out the stages of contemplation, autobiographical or “confessional” works, and poetic praising of God:

To survey the history of these four groups of contemplative writing (which, of course, often overlap in practice and do not correspond to specific genre divisions) is to view the religious developments of the period in a microcosm. A kind of writing which originates in the cloister slowly changes its nature and expands its audience to encompass not only the secular clergy but also (from the thirteenth century to the end of the Middle Ages) ever increasing numbers of religious women and lay people of both sexes.<sup>60</sup>

Rolle began his writing career in Latin, using these four types of works — mostly in combination, as Watson notes — to teach secular priests about the contemplative life of the clergy, the life of those removed from public service so that they may meditate solely on works of contemplation. His earliest writings, identified by Watson, are mostly glosses on the Bible such as any scholar would write during their tenure at Oxford, but even in this early period he shows an interest in poetry in his *Canticum Amoris* (a poem about the Virgin). Rolle's time at Oxford would have exposed him to the traditional theological works involved in the training of priests, most notably Augustine's writings, from which he may have received his understanding of the stages to achieve a contemplative life, and

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Spirit,”” *The Downside Review* 96 [1978], 61.

<sup>60</sup> Nicholas Watson (ed.), *Emendatio vitae; Orationes ad honorem nominis Ihesu*, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1995), 2-3.

where he may have chosen the “confessional” or autobiographical form of teaching that he employs in the *Incendium Amoris*, which belongs to what Watson calls his “Middle Period.”<sup>61</sup> He would also have been exposed to the Franciscan teachings of Bonaventure (1221-1274) and Robert Grosseteste (d.1253).<sup>62</sup> While the Aristotelian Scholastics sought to understand theology through logic and order (*intellectus*), the Franciscan mysticism of Bonaventura and Grosseteste separate the impulse to learn through the senses from the “yearning for the good and the beautiful, what may be called the “gaze of the intellect” (*aspectus*), which gives way to “the looking of the heart” (*affectus*). By separating *intellectus* from *aspectus*, Grosseteste and a later Franciscan, William of Occam (d. 1348), separated the Scholastic desire for logic or science from faith. As William F. Pollard writes: “Our reason disposes our affections to believe, to act morally, and to see our source and our end.” Rolle inherits this Franciscan theme, leading many to call him “the English Bonaventura.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> At Oxford in the middle decades of the fourteenth century, the course of studies still followed “the arts” which were divided into two categories: the *trivium* (Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy). Students pursued what they could learn from individual Masters in these areas and so individual texts were chosen by the teachers, but there is evidence that Wyclif had read Augustine during his education at Oxford within a decade or so of Rolle. See G. R. Evans, *John Wyclif: Myth & Reality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 43-66, for a description of the studies and how they were achieved at Oxford in the fourteenth century.

<sup>62</sup> Bonaventure was a Franciscan who had declined the position of archbishop of York, and Grosseteste was a teacher of Franciscans at Oxford.

<sup>63</sup> William F. Pollard, “Richard Rolle and the ‘Eye of the Heart,’” *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England* ed. by William F. Pollard and Robert Boenig,

In the transition from logical study to the experience of feelings, Rolle found a new basis for an understanding of the life of contemplation that did not require university training, a basis founded on affective piety wherein physical sensations — Rolle’s “*calor, dulcor, and canor*” (heat, sweetness, and song), which Rolle describes most notably in Latin in the *Incendium Amoris* and the *Emendatio Vitae*, and in English in the *Ego Dormio* — indicate union with God.<sup>64</sup> While the concept of a physical manifestation of God’s love is not original — the idea has its founding in the *Song of Songs*, and medieval writers, such as Bernard of Clairvaux (d.1153), had expounded on the theme of sexual union as a way of articulating the ineffable connection with God for centuries — Rolle was able to make the life of contemplation and the union with God more accessible.<sup>65</sup> He did

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(Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 92-95. This demonstrates how Rolle’s view of what he most likely learned at Oxford was changing and may have been the cause for him to break off his studies there and follow the “gaze of the intellect” to affective piety. This form of piety is most often associated with women mystics like Julian of Norwich or Margery Kempe mainly because it is expressed in a broader show of emotion and feelings like weeping. Rolle’s emotional descriptions, while perhaps more subtle than the women writers who came after him, are displayed with a similar enthusiasm. Pollard notes that the link between the Franciscan writings of Bonaventure and Grosseteste is first noted by C. Horstmann, who transcribed many of the Rolle manuscripts at the end of the nineteenth century, heaping them together in one large volume, and Margaret Deansley, who created an edition of the Latin *Incendium Amoris*.

<sup>64</sup> These two works were translated into English by Richard Misyn in the 1430s and traveled with M.N.’s translation of Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror* in the Amherst manuscript. Misyn’s translation can be found in Oxford, Corpus Christi Coll. 236. There are six other translations in English, all of which are from the late-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries. (Allen 240-243).

<sup>65</sup> M. Corneille Halfants writes: “Bernard found in the Bible an inspired book, Solomon’s Song of Songs, which depicts this drama of the soul’s relation with God in terms of the love which unites a bride to her bridegroom. It is true that Bernard often applies to the Church the words that are addressed to the spouse in

not recommend a life simply of self-denial and want, such as might have been espoused by other hermits or contemplatives, but rather a comfortable solitary life in which one might forget about the physical world so that the focus could be on loving God.<sup>66</sup> He suggests that when the “heat” or “burning” begins in the early stages of the union with God, slight imperfections or small sins are burned away and so perfection may come even to those who are not perfect in their lives. This lessens the purification that is often seen as a requirement for a life of contemplation and encourages a much broader audience for works about a connection with God.<sup>67</sup> The accessibility that Rolle found may have led to his desire to teach the

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this canticle of love. Entire Sermons are devoted to this subject. Also at times he tells us that the Virgin Mary is the only creature in whom this privileged union with God is perfectly realized. But his teaching is chiefly devoted to describing the joys of the loving union of the individual soul with the Word.” Kilian Walsh (trans.), *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, Volume 2: The Song of Songs 1* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1971), x.

<sup>66</sup> For example, in *The Commandment* he warns: “When þou art by þyn on, be euer, til slepe cum, oþer in praier oþer in gode meditaciouns; and ordeyn þi praiynge and þi wakyng and þi fastynge þat hit be in discreccioun, nat ouer mych ne ouer litel. Bot þynke euer þat of al þynge most coueiteth God loue of mannys harte, and forþi seke more to loue hym þan to do any penaunce, for vnskyful penaunce is litel worth or nought, bot loue is euer þe best, wheþer þou do penaunce litel or mych.” S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson (ed.), *Richard Rolle Prose and Verse*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 35 (hereafter shortened to *Rolle*).

<sup>67</sup> Watson explains that Rolle accomplishes two things in *Emendatio Vitae*: He likens his idea of the contemplative life to the highest order of angels, the seraphim – whose name means “the burning ones” – but more important, he makes use of the burning to “justify his confinement of penitence to the early stages of the spiritual life (since love can swallow up the inevitable traces of sin in even the most perfect more effectively than penitence can suppress them)” (Watson, *Emendatio* 16). By expediting the forgiveness of sins, the life of contemplation can be achieved by a wider audience without the fear of punishment for those sins.

Latin illiterate — at least religious women like Margaret Kirkeby (dates unknown), the nun to whom his English writings are dedicated — about this life.

Not until his “late period (English),” roughly 1345-1349 as Watson designates it, does Rolle begin to write in English.<sup>68</sup> S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson cites three epistles (*Ego Dormio*, *The Commandment*, and *The Form of Living*<sup>69</sup>), two short works (*Desire and Delight* and *Ghostly Gladness*), several lyrics and two versions of *Meditations of the Passion* as works, all in English, dedicated to Margaret Kirkeby, a recluse that Rolle shepherded into the cloistered life and who moved to Hampole after Rolle’s death.<sup>70</sup> Kirkeby is also a recipient of one of

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<sup>68</sup> Watson’s view of the order of the texts, expressed both in this introduction and in *Richard Rolle and the Invention of Authority*, varies from Allen’s assertions in *Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle* (Watson, *Emendatio*, 18 note 40).

<sup>69</sup> All of the epistles appear in one manuscript, Longleat 29, which is considered to be a religious volume made in the Southeast (possibly in Kent), but which may contain the closest wording to the original Northern dialect. The three epistles appear frequently in manuscripts made for religious or devout women under the tutelage of religious men. A. I. Doyle speculates, because of the inclusion of John London – “the most famous recluse of Westminster” – and the mixture of other materials in the manuscript that it may have been connected with Syon Abbey. A. I. Doyle, *A survey of the origins and circulation of theological writings in English in the 14th, 15th, and early 16th centuries with special consideration of the part of the clergy therein*, (Unpublished manuscript), Vol 1, 192; Vol 2, 81-83). The *Form of Living* exists in thirty complete and twelve partial manuscripts and is listed in both the library of the Brethren of Syon Abbey and in Barking Abbey, two libraries that had female and lay patronage. *Ego Dormio* appears in fifteen manuscripts and *The Commandment* in twelve. See Doyle *Survey*, 189; Vincent Gillespie (ed.), *Syon Abbey* (London: The British Library in Association with the British Academy, 2001), 257.

<sup>70</sup> *Rolle* xv. One of the manuscripts of *Ego Dormio* is addressed to an unidentified nun at Yedingham, although Rosamund Allen suggests that the tone of the work does not seem appropriate to a woman already in holy orders, so Margaret Kirkeby seems more likely to be the addressed. See also Rosamund S. Allen

Rolle's miracles attested to in the 1380s testimony for his canonization. Not only did he heal her during a seizure, but promised that she would not be subject to this illness again during his lifetime.<sup>71</sup> While Rolle's writing and the stories of his miracles did not result in canonization, his English books became very popular and expanded the desire for the life of contemplation beyond the traditional contemplative audience.

The message that Rolle's English works bring to this wider audience is provided in simple instructions, which even though initially aimed at a religious woman, could be followed by just about anyone and could have results similar to those that the clergy expected to be theirs alone. In *Ego Dormio*, named for a passage from the *Song of Songs*,<sup>72</sup> Rolle begins by describing the three hierarchies of angels, each of which is divided into three orders, the highest of which is the seraphim, thus connecting them to the first sensual realization of communion with God: Rolle's "*calor*." He then explains why he began here:

To þe I writ þis speciali, for I hope in þe more goodnes þan in anoþer, þat þou wil gif þi þoght to fulfil in dede þat þou seest is profitable for þi soule, and þat lif gif þe to in þe whoch þou may holiest offer þi [hert] to Ihesu Criste, and lest be in besynesse of þis world. For if þou stabilly loue God and brennyngly whils þou lyvest here, withouten dout þi sete is ordeyned for þe ful hegh and ioiful bifore þe face of God amonge [his]

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(trans.), *Richard Rolle: The English Writings*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 132.

<sup>71</sup> R. Allen 152-153.

<sup>72</sup> *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat*; I sleep and my heart wakes. *The Song of Songs* 5:2.

holy angels.<sup>73</sup>

The implicit promise is not just a chance to be among the angels, but to become a member of the highest order of angels, which is a privilege normally reserved for contemplatives.<sup>74</sup>

The fact that he is writing this to a woman without the education of the clergy indicates an opening of the life of the highest contemplation to a much broader audience, removing all the requirements of learning and reading that had defined the life of the contemplative. In the *Form of Living*, he implores his reader to concentrate solely on the names of “Jesus” and “Mary,” assuring her that this is all she needs to ward off evil and to enter into the joy one feels in the contemplative life. He writes:

The dar at gretly couait many bokes; hold loue in hert and in werke, and  
þou hast al done þat we may say or write. For fulnes of þe lawe is charite;  
in þat hongeth al.<sup>75</sup>

With such a simple instruction he opens up a life of contemplation to women and to those who are not educated enough to read Latin, a trend that would become

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<sup>73</sup> *Rolle* 26-27.

<sup>74</sup> In Gregory the Great’s *Moralia*, each of the various types of men are mirrored in heaven by one of the orders of the angels. Carole Straw explains each of the nine levels ending with: “Finally, the contemplatives, cleansed of all earthly desire, are honored with the highest rank. Burning with heavenly love, they inspire and teach others most effectively. Igniting their brothers with the love of God and enlightening their dim vision, these fiery contemplatives kindle others to repent of their sins. Such contemplatives who teach will join the Seraphim.” Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 36.

<sup>75</sup> *Rolle* 18.

very important to devotional writers in the second half of the century.

In all three of his English epistles, Rolle describes a three-tiered system for loving God — the first being keeping the commandments and following the laws of the Church as spelled out in the Gospels; the second, giving up everything of this world, including family and all possessions; and finally the third, overcoming the three enemies, the world, the devil and the flesh, while achieving a connection with God that cannot be permanent in this life, but leads to the life of perfection in the next.<sup>76</sup> At this point, Rolle expresses his signature manifestations of *calor*, *dulcor*, and *canor* as the reward of achieving the highest level of contemplation in which only the name of Jesus is of any importance to the recipient of these manifestations. Rolle uses the senses, often associated with physical love, to demonstrate the similarities with love of God, just as the *Song of Songs* is used to equate the physical love between a king and his lady to the love God has for his people and his Church.<sup>77</sup> Rolle, however, is not speaking metaphorically of a distant relationship that is difficult to understand or reserved

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<sup>76</sup> For the description of the three levels see *Rolle* 16-18. In the *Form of Living*, he calls these three levels, “insuperabile,” “inseparabile,” and “synguler.” These three levels seem to have a similarity with the *Mirror*’s notion of the three deaths described on [...]. M.N. found it extremely important in his glossing of Marguerite’s *Mirror* to point out that this last could only be achieved fully in the afterlife. M.N. responds in his thirteenth gloss: “þis is in þe tyme of rauyschinge and vnyon in God; it haþ not of tyme, for it lasteþ but litel while in eny creature heere in þis world, for þe corrupcion of þe fleisch lettīþ it þat þe soule may not þere longe abide” (Doiron 304).

<sup>77</sup> Nicholas Watson, *Richard Rolle and the Invention of Authority*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 69.



only for the well educated. In *Ego Dormio*, Rolle promises that when one stops being concerned with worldly matters, “hit wil kyndil þi hert to set at noght al þe goodes of þis world and al þe ioy, and to desire brennyngly þe light of heuyn with angels and halowes.”<sup>78</sup> This will inevitably lead one to

lust st[e]l bi þI on to þynke of Crist, and to be in mych praynge, for þrogh good þoghtes and holy praier þi hert shal be mad brennyng in þe loue of Ihesu Crist, and þan shal þou fele swetnesse and gostly ioy, both in praynge and þynkyng.<sup>79</sup>

In the last stage,

[i]f þou wil þynke þis [Christ’s passion] euery day, þou shalt fynd gret swetnesse, þat shal draw þi hert vp, and mak þe fal in wepyng and in grete langyng to Ihesu; and þi þoght shal be reft abouen al erthly þynges, aboue þe sky and þe sterres, so þat þe egh of þi hert may loke in to heuyn.<sup>80</sup>

So while Rolle describes three distinct stages, he makes it clear that one will inevitably lead to the next if the practitioner maintains his meditations, and that they are emotional stages, not intellectual ones and so do not require the rigor that had previously been the tortuous requisite for this life of contemplation.

The other requirement, though, is God’s grace, which is not achieved through study of any kind:

“And þan entres þou in to þe brid degree of loue, in þe whiche þou shalt be in gret delite and confort, if þou may get grace to cum þerto. For I say nat þat þou, or another þat redeth þis, shal do hit al, for þat is in Goddis wille, þat cheseth whom he wil to do þat here is said, or other thyng in

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<sup>78</sup> Rolle 29.

<sup>79</sup> Rolle 29.

<sup>80</sup> Rolle 31.

oper maner, as he gifeth men grace to har hele. For dyuers men taketh dyuers yiftes of our lord Ihesu Criste; and al þei shal be set in þe ioy of heuyn þat endeth in charite. Who-so is in þis degre, wisdom he hath, and discrecioun, to lyve at Goddis wille.”<sup>81</sup>

By reaffirming an idea that has its foundations in Thomas Aquinas, who allowed that non-contemplatives might attain this highest life of perfection by the grace of God alone, Rolle was the first to create a hope for those of lesser orders or the laity to enter into the life of contemplation.<sup>82</sup> Rolle’s role in bringing the message of the possibility of a union with God outside of a clerical setting is important to the movements that followed. Wyclif and his followers were interested in his works on account of the expanded possibilities for spiritual experiences outside of the cloister.<sup>83</sup> Both Walter Hilton and the *Cloud*-author indicate this effect in their own writings where they feel the need to clarify Rolle’s statements on these physical sensations and the union with God they represent may indicate how widespread Rolle’s influence had become by the last quarter of the century and how his writings might have been used by Wycliffites

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<sup>81</sup> *Rolle* 31.

<sup>82</sup> Dorward and Clark translate Aquinas’s words: “It can happen that someone may merit more in the works of the active life than another in the works of the contemplative life, that is, if on account of the abundance of the divine love, so that God’s will may be fulfilled for his glory, he bears for a while with being separated from the sweetness of divine contemplation” (Dorward and Clark 179 note 265). Hilton took up this theme in the *Scale* as well, although he extends the grace of God to lay men and women. (Dorward and Clark 130-131.)

<sup>83</sup> Hughes writes: “Rolle was the first writer to make a significant contribution to arousing an interest in the possibilities of attaining emotional spiritual experiences within the domestic household, especially the private chapel” (Hughes 259).

and other heretical sects.<sup>84</sup> Rolle's interest in translating for the Latin illiterate is also important to an understanding of the works of the Yorkshire circle at the end of the century. Rolle's Psalter was considered acceptable by both orthodox members of the Church and by Lollard practitioners well into the sixteenth century and survives in twenty manuscripts.<sup>85</sup>

From the Old Testament Book of Psalms, Rolle translated a text based on the life of Christ from the New Testament, *Meditations on the Passion*, which appears in both a shorter and longer form.<sup>86</sup> As the title implies, it is a work describing the passion of Christ from the point of view of an observer who wishes to trade places with Christ for all the sins he has committed.<sup>87</sup> Rolle's descriptions are as visceral and grim as the descriptions in the *Meditationes Vitae*

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<sup>84</sup> For example in Chapter 45 of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, the author warns that beginners can misunderstand the metaphorical heat – seemingly referring to Rolle's burning – and think it a real physical sensation: “for to haue þeire brestes ouþer enflaumid wiþ vnkyndely hete of compleccion, caused of misrewlyng of þeire bodies or of þis feinid worching, or elles þei conceyue a fals hete wrou(gh)t by þe feende, þeire goostly enmye, caused of þeire pride & of þeire fleschlines & þeire coriouse of wit” (Phyllis Hodgson [trans.], *Cloud of Unknowing and Related Treatises on Contemplative Prayer*, [Exeter: Catholic Records Press, 1982], 47). (Hereafter this will be abbreviated *Cloud*.) Further examples are discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>85</sup> R. Allen 65.

<sup>86</sup> R. Allen 90-91.

<sup>87</sup> Meditating on the human life of Christ is something that Walter Hilton also advises for his lay followers as something concrete that can be studied and reflected upon. S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson, *Walter Hilton's Mixed Life edited from Lambeth Palace MS 472* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1986), 29 (hereafter known as *Mixed Life*).

*Christi*, a work credited to Bonaventure in Rolle's time.<sup>88</sup> By focusing on the suffering of the human Jesus, Rolle offers a sensibility to which the uneducated could relate without a deeper understanding of the mysteries of the divine Christ, again in keeping with the theme that achieving the highest levels of contemplation does not require a theological understanding, but rather only a deep devotion to Jesus Christ.

In the English works of Richard Rolle, the progression of the four groups of theological literature in the vernacular that Watson has laid out can be seen clearly, a progression that the Yorkshire circle takes up in the latter half of the century and expands upon. He created an interest in works of contemplation for the nuns or religious women, even works of high contemplation like the Psalms and a rendering of the passion of Christ. He advised women to meditate on the name and the human life of Jesus in order to achieve the highest spiritual life — not just for the uneducated, but for people of all educational backgrounds. Through the rest of this study, these themes appear again and again with relation to the Yorkshire circle and especially in M.N.'s *Mirror*. The Yorkshire circle would not only have to deal with Rolle's legacy, but with the possibility of his canonization, bringing him squarely into view for these Yorkshire writers who seem to examine his work through a lens tinged with a concern about heresy

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<sup>88</sup> More than half a century later, this work became the basis for Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, a work offered in English instead of a translation of the Gospels. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

spurred by Wyclif and his followers.<sup>89</sup> In this sense, Rolle served as a director for the Yorkshire circle, as they would have to employ the translation of delicate works of contemplation while at the same time trying to tame them for their orthodox readers. His legacy does not stop with the Yorkshire circle that is the main focus of this study: a century later in 1491, Richard Methley, a Carthusian at Mount Grace, who translated both M.N.'s version of the *Mirror of Simple Souls* and the *Cloud of Unknowing* into Latin, not only used the style of autobiography found in the *Incendium Amoris*, but also compared his own experience of *calor*, *dulcor*, and *canor* with that of Rolle.<sup>90</sup> Rolle's spiritual and literary legacies had an immediate impact on writing and the audiences for that writing and have a direct impact on understanding M.N.'s motivations for translating Marguerite's *Mirror*.

## 2. John Thoresby

The plague that took Richard Rolle in 1349 also did severe damage to the episcopate of York, devastating as much as forty-five percent of the diocese in the summer of that year.<sup>91</sup> When John Thoresby, another Oxford man and companion of King Edward III, became Archbishop of York in 1352, he found himself in serious trouble due to the radical decline in clergymen, both in number and in

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<sup>89</sup> Allen 51 ff.

<sup>90</sup> Allen 416.

<sup>91</sup> Hughes 136.

education, and the necessity caused by the death of so many churchmen from the plague that his predecessors had for promoting “lay administration of the sacraments such as confession, and hasty, temporary consecration of churches and cemeteries.”<sup>92</sup> During the middle decades of the fourteenth century, repeated acts of violence upon the clergy brought on by the abuses of the Church, perceived or real, along with continuing outbreaks of plague created a distrust of the men who were supposed to be the spiritual leaders of the kingdom.<sup>93</sup> The authority the priests of Yorkshire held over the laity had been seriously compromised and the weakness in clerical discipline on account of repeated visitations by the plague in 1353-4 and 1369 created the need for reform both in the clergy and in the relationship the clergy had with the laity. Thoresby, however, recognized that the way to re-establish the respect for secular priests that was required for their authority was to educate the laity directly in their own language.<sup>94</sup> In 1356,

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<sup>92</sup> Hughes 136.

<sup>93</sup> Hughes chronicles a long list of abuses by the clergy who, because of the plague, were afraid to take on their responsibilities, leaving their churches (and parishioners) vulnerable to violence and looting. Thoresby also had a problem with alien appointees made by the pope who had no care for their foreign responsibilities and so neglected them. He recognized this problem and “stated that anyone ordained to a cure of souls could not desert his living without doing damage to the church” and spent most of his early years rounding up hiding priests and trying to rebuild the trust between the Church hierarchy and the parishioners. (Hughes 136-143).

<sup>94</sup> This was not a new solution to the problem. In 1281, Archbishop Pecham (1278-1292), a Franciscan monk who had been elevated to the see of Canterbury, confronted the need for education among the priests of the realm by issuing a legislation, a part of which, *De informatione simplicium*, was directed at his ignorant clergy (*Lay Folks’ Catechism* ix-x; Hughes 146). It reiterated six articles of religious instruction, which was comprised of the “fourteen articles of faith, the

Thoresby created a new Latin catechism for his priests and commissioned John Gaytrick, a Benedictine monk of St. Mary's York, to translate the work into the vernacular in a book most commonly referred to as the *Lay Folks' Catechism*.<sup>95</sup>

Thoresby's legal and secular talents had been recognized at an early age and his rise through the ranks to the see at York was quick. He held several key political positions — Warden of the Cinque Ports and Lord Privy Seal, for example — before he became the Lord Chancellor in 1349. He resigned as Lord Chancellor after losing a dispute with the king, but remained as good a politician as clergyman. He solved an ages-old dispute between the dignities of York and Canterbury by bowing to Canterbury's supremacy while maintaining the title of

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ten commandments, the seven works of mercy, the seven vices and the seven sacraments" (Hughes 146). These were to be taught to the laity in the vernacular at least four times a year. He also fought against foreign sinecures that did nothing but ensure leaderless parishes throughout England. But Pecham provided nothing more than the articles of instruction, and as knowledge of Latin declined during the middle of the fourteenth century, and the number of priests with adequate education waned, the instruction of the laity became weaker and weaker, particularly in the matter of the sacraments. During the first half of the fourteenth century, several attempts at creating handbooks for the priests for the instruction of the laity were made, including William of Pagula's (d. 1332) *Oculus sacerdotis*, Ralph FitzRalph's (d. 1360) *Memoriale presbiterorum*, and William of Nassington's (d. 1354) *Speculum Vitae*. Each of these works was an attempt to supply secular priests with education enough to provide the sacraments and deal with the laity, knowledge that was falling more and more to the mendicant orders who challenged the authority of the secular priests. (Hughes 146-9).

<sup>95</sup> R. N. Swanson, "The Origin of 'The Lay Folks' Catechism,'" *Medium Aevum* 60, (1991): 92; also note that I have chosen Hughes' spelling of "Gaytrick." Nolloth and Simmons used "Taystek," and Anne Hudson chronicles at least two other spellings (Hudson, "A New Look," 246-7.)

Primate of England.<sup>96</sup> He was able to straddle secular and clerical rivalries and maintain some peace in his archbishopric and so his plan to educate the laity with a catechism in the vernacular was received well. His friendship with Archbishop of Canterbury Simon Islip (1349-1366) and with Edward III made it easier to implement his ideas for reform both among the laity and the clergy.

In his letter commissioning John Gaytrick to make the English translation of his own revised Latin catechism, Archbishop Thoresby clearly states that he is asking that this be done because “both the lay people and others of mean learning have not merely fallen so far into errors, but are inwardly ignorant of the basis of our faith, which is intolerable ignorance.”<sup>97</sup> He asks that Gaytrick — of whom he states in the letter that “God [...] has endowed with the flowers of eloquence” — “roughly translate the aforesaid schedule with all possible speed, seeking clarity of meaning rather than stylistic elegance, since it is intended for the informing of the laity.”<sup>98</sup> Henry Edward Nolloth speculates that the *Lay Folks’ Catechism* was not necessarily intended to be read by all of the laity, but taught to them every Sunday and that the reason it was written in simple verse was so that the passages might be memorized by those of “mean learning.”<sup>99</sup> Nolloth writes that the

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<sup>96</sup> For a full discussion of Thoresby’s career, see Hughes 129-135 and *Lay Folks’ Catechism* xii-xv.

<sup>97</sup> Swanson 99.

<sup>98</sup> Swanson 100.

<sup>99</sup> This was in the tradition of the pageants that were performed in York and other places for most of the fourteenth century which touched on key points of Christ’s life, most notably his birth and his Passion. The plays gave the laity insight into



English version of the catechism “is a very wide expansion of the original text: evidently for the sake of fuller explanation and clearer understanding by the lay-folk,” which is very much in keeping with many of the translations of the last quarter of the century.<sup>100</sup>

The *Lay Folks’ Catechism* is divided into the six elements that every good Christian should know: the fourteen points of faith, the ten commandments, the seven sacraments, the seven works of mercy, the seven virtues, and the seven deadly sins. The *Catechism* breaks down each of these groups, explains why they are important, and carefully illustrates how each should be understood. The *Catechism* separates the fourteen points of faith into sections so that they may more easily be understood. The first seven points “falles to goddes godhede” while the second group of seven covers “christes manhede.”<sup>101</sup> By delineating the points that deal with the faith in God from the faith in Christ, one can easily juxtapose them so that they are easier to remember and apply. Likewise, the commandments are classified as laws pertaining to God (the first three) and laws pertaining to neighbors (the last seven) and the section concludes with a reminder that Christ stipulated in the Gospels that there are really only two commandments:

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Christ’s life without giving them vernacular Gospels. Nolloth makes the connection between Thoresby’s *Catechism* and the “miracle-plays” performed in York, but only as conjecture passed to him from another source (*Lay Folks’ Catechism* xvii-xviii).

<sup>100</sup> *Lay Folks’ Catechism* xvii. This is the object of many of the translations created at the end of the fourteenth century. As is discussed in the next chapter, creating translations of a text was also an opportunity to edit them for content appropriate to the less educated.

<sup>101</sup> *Lay Folks’ Catechism* 22.

to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. The concluding line of this section spells out that “who-so dos this twa fulfille the othir.”<sup>102</sup> Again, Thoresby’s purpose is to simplify for easy memorizing, and to explain for better understanding. Thoresby even reorders the sacraments from the way that Pecham initially had them, so that he can describe the first five (baptism, confirmation, confession, communion, and the anointing of the dead) as sacraments all men must receive, while the last two (holy orders and matrimony) are considered voluntary. By ordering each of his lists so that they are easy to organize in memory, Thoresby brings a clearer understanding of the basis of faith. This is done for each of the six elements.

There are at least two variations of the *Catechism*, one of which will be more important to the movement relating to John Wyclif and heresy. Thoresby’s idea for presenting the laity with material in their own language is an important step for both Wyclif and the Yorkshire writers who would follow. Vernacular translations would also create opportunities for scribes to either wittingly or unwittingly add material of dubious content to works that were already considered orthodox, but this is still a matter of scholarly debate.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> *Lay Folks’ Catechism* 60.

<sup>103</sup> Anne Hudson points to at least twenty-five manuscripts that are based on the text of the *Catechism* as it appears in Thoresby’s register for the year of 1357, but focuses on Lambeth 408, the manuscript that Nolloth and Simmons claim to have been re-worked by John Wyclif with the support of Archbishop Thoresby (*Lay Folks’ Catechism* xxii-xxiii). In their edition of the *Catechism*, they lay out the two major variations side by side to show their similarities and the important differences that show a Lollard bent. (The pages actually contain two Latin versions – the one that Thoresby wrote and the original Pecham *Constitutions* –

Thoresby did not single-handedly bring about the policies that established a closer connection between the laity and the clergy. Letters between Thoresby and Islip make it clear that this was a problem being faced everywhere in England. But, while it was not solely a problem for the York diocese, Thoresby was the first to enact a policy that dealt directly with the laity in solving the problem. He was also key in establishing a circle of men — mainly family and friends based in, but not confined to, Yorkshire — who promoted his beliefs throughout the kingdom during his lifetime and at least the last quarter of the fourteenth century.

The strong sense of pastoral mission shared by Thoresby and his household facilitated the subsequent development of the contemplative movement in the diocese by raising moral and educational standards, which were an essential step in the impingement of eremitic values on the consciousness of the ordinary man.<sup>104</sup>

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for comparison.) It is important to note here because the text of Lambeth 408 makes an even greater effort to draw out the six items that Thoresby (and before him Pecham and the Lateran Council) delineated as what every Christian should know about his faith. The Lambeth manuscript has a section at the beginning that breaks down the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, and the Creed, all with the seeming intention of educating a Latin illiterate in the foundations of the Christian faith. The question becomes whether the Lambeth reading was ever considered to be orthodox or was used only among the Lollards, a matter that Anne Hudson has taken up (Hudson "A New Look," 257-258). Some personal connections do exist between Thoresby and John Wyclif beyond Nolloth and Simmons' conjecture about Lambeth 408. Shortly after Wyclif's ordination there is a record of a John Wyclif in the household of the Archbishop of York and a number of records exist showing Thoresby's support of the Wyclif family (Hughes 163-165). While both desired to bring a truer understanding of Christian belief to the laity, in no way can it be argued that Thoresby supported Wyclif's later ideas involving the sacraments or the role of the priesthood. (Two issues that are discussed in the next section.) The later use of the *Lay Folks' Catechism* by the Wycliffites, establishes that there was some respect for Archbishop Thoresby by Wyclif and his followers.

<sup>104</sup> Hughes 172.

Hughes points out that Thoresby did not have an interest in the works of Rolle or in teaching the life of contemplation to the laity — a matter that Hughes attributes to the rise of Thomas Arundel, who was to have a greater impact on religious literature in the vernacular.<sup>105</sup> But Thoresby can be credited with an attempt to bring the laity back into a discussion about devotion and its importance to the changing world and their growing interest in spiritual matters.

One of Thoresby's great strengths was that he selected a strong corps of men, mostly relatives, to surround him in his several positions, both political and ecclesiastic, who moved with him from position to position. Many would serve in his administration at York, and some would outlast him, ensuring that his policies would continue into the last decades of the fourteenth century.<sup>106</sup> The nepotistic precedents established by Thoresby in his development of the Yorkshire clergy would be followed by Thomas Arundel to build up his own group of friends, which traveled from his first see at Ely to York (in 1388) and on to Canterbury at the end of the century. In Arundel's time in York, the circle that is the focus of the next chapter is created, a circle that might very well have contained M.N. Thoresby's ability as an administrator both in the secular and religious worlds would be mirrored by Arundel to build a tradition of a clergy that could

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<sup>105</sup> Hughes 173.

<sup>106</sup> Hughes chronicles Thoresby's family influence through his political and ecclesiastic positions as well as the friends he made at Oxford. Hughes speculates on connections between Thoresby and Wyclif that can be made through several Oxford colleagues (Hughes 161-173).

communicate with, and be a substantial part of, the secular world in the period of great change and conflict at the end of the fourteenth century.

### 3. John Wyclif

Whether John Wyclif is viewed as an early reformer for the English church or a heretic, his role in the creation of the Lollard heterodoxy is not clear-cut. The Council of Constance in 1415, more than thirty years after his death, condemned his writings and his person and had him dug up and burned as a heretic.<sup>107</sup> His writings have been blamed as the prime cause of the Lollard movement that followed his death. Translator of the Bible, instigator of the Peasants' Revolt, morning star of the English Reformation: these are all titles that have at one time or another been attributed to John Wyclif. But in 1381, when his questioning of the doctrine of transubstantiation was challenged at Oxford and he was forced to retreat to his parish in Lutterworth, he was a theologian who had overstepped the bounds by challenging three main pillars of his society: the rights of the Church over the Crown, the monopoly the clergy held over the Gospels, and the sanctity of the sacraments. The role his writings and beliefs would play in the disruption of English society was not yet evident and he was allowed to die in

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<sup>107</sup> Wyclif was not formally condemned until the Council of Constance in 1415, at which point the council ordered that his body be exhumed and burned. This order was not completed until 1428, after Martin V, fearing other European heresies, made a concerted effort to have the order fulfilled adding that the bones "should be publicly burned and the ashes so disposed of that no vestige or trace should remain." Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 76.

peace, if also in disgrace, in 1384, still holding the position of rector at Lutterworth. In the 1380s, while Wyclif's beliefs themselves were condemned, Wyclif was not punished further than his removal from Oxford.<sup>108</sup>

The men of Oxford took pride in the power of inquiry, and Wyclif's Oxford career gave him the chance to work with men like William of Occam, a Franciscan scholar who called for Church submission to the Crown (as far as taxes and property rights) and who would end up in exile after challenging the pope at Avignon, reaffirming the condemned Olivian beliefs in poverty and claiming that John XXII was a heretic for living in such grandeur.<sup>109</sup> When

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<sup>108</sup> A committee of "two monks, four friars, four seculars, and two Doctors of Law" headed by William Barton, the Chancellor of Oxford after 1379, condemned Wyclif's teachings on the Eucharist, giving the order that "if anyone at all publicly accepts, teaches or defends these opinions, in the schools or outside them within the University, he shall be imprisoned, shall not be allowed to carry out any scholastic acts and shall be excommunicated (with reversal of the excommunication reserved to the Chancellor himself and his successors). Anyone who even listens to such teaching shall also be excommunicated" (Evans 188-189). Wyclif appealed the decision to the king and his old supporter, John of Gaunt (1340-1399) – who served as regent in Edward III's failing years and Richard II's minority – appeared at Oxford to discuss the case. There is speculation that Gaunt convinced him to accept the decision and retire to Lutterworth.

<sup>109</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton quotes Peter McNiven's summary of historians' view of Ockham: "His most revolutionary assertion, for which he claimed the best Scriptural authority, was that 'the Church' was not the formally-constituted body headed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but the whole community of the faithful, comprising all 'true believers' from the days of the Apostles to the present. He combined the apparently unambiguous message of the Gospels – that Jesus had counseled submission to the temporal power – with the more peculiarly Spiritual Franciscan doctrine that Jesus and His followers had renounced all worldly possessions. These doctrines enabled Ockham to argue that secular rulers held ultimate jurisdiction over material property held by ecclesiastics, and that the kings of England had the right to tax Church property" (Kerby-Fulton 330). Ockham's work was openly discussed at Oxford, but once he reached Avignon,

Wyclif challenged the rights of clergymen, even bishops and popes, to be above the power of secular law and taxation, he initially found encouragement among the nobility.<sup>110</sup> Though Pope Gregory XI (d.1378) attempted to have him silenced for this conclusion and for supporting the Crown in not paying tithes to the Church in 1377, Wyclif appealed to the king. John of Gaunt, the regent for young Richard II, intervened.<sup>111</sup>

When Wyclif wrote about translating Scripture into the vernacular, he found support among scholars and churchmen. Nolloth speculates that the so-called Lollard version of Archbishop Thoresby's *Lay Folks' Catechism* was not only written by Wyclif, but was written with Thoresby's support.<sup>112</sup> Richard Ullerston (d. 1423), a staunch supporter of orthodoxy, wrote in defense of a

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he was forced to flee the academic inquisition before a verdict was decided and so lived out his life in exile (Kerby-Fulton 334).

<sup>110</sup> John of Gaunt found Wyclif, as the inheritor of Ockham's thoughts on the right of the Crown over the Church in matters of taxation, useful when a papal tax was imposed in 1374. Whether Gaunt knew of Wyclif because of the latter's writings or because of family connections in Yorkshire is unclear, but Wyclif was sent to Bruges to argue his case against papal taxation of England. He claimed that the pope had the right to ask for alms, but could not enforce the request, and if he tried interdiction, God would recognize the injustice and the interdiction would have no effect. Wyclif was rewarded by being overlooked for any advanced positions within the Church. (Evans 141-145).

<sup>111</sup> Gregory XI sent papal bulls to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the King, and the Chancellor of Oxford, demanding that Wyclif be silenced – there was a list of nineteen opinions held by Wyclif that the pope condemned – but he received no satisfaction as each attempt to condemn Wyclif was thwarted by a secular request for no formal punishment, probably instigated by John of Gaunt. Evan suggests that the matter was derailed by the Great Schism, which began in the following year after Gregory's death (Evans 169-178).

<sup>112</sup> *Lay Folks' Catechism* xxii-xxiv.

translation of the Bible in 1401 arguing that Jerome's version of the Bible was also a translation from the original Greek and Hebrew.<sup>113</sup> The English translation of the Bible, whether it was actually written by Wyclif or John Purvey or by a collection of his followers, would not be officially condemned until Thomas Arundel's *Constitutions* (1410).<sup>114</sup> After that, the desire for an English Bible, or any theological works in English held by the laity, would be seen as a tenet of Lollardy and tied back to Wyclif.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Evans 207; Aston 75.

<sup>114</sup> Aston examines extensively the identity of the translator of the Wyclif Bible. Wyclif has been discounted simply as a matter of timing and his own illness at the end of his life. Hudson cites early critics suggesting John Purvey as the translator, of which she has serious doubts as well. Whether the Wyclif Bible was created as a group effort or by a single author is not clear. However, in Arundel's *Constitutions*, John Wyclif is mentioned by name, but not as the author of the translation. Arundel bans the translation of any text of the Scripture into English or any other tongue, " 'by way of a book, pamphlet, or treatise ... newly composed in the time of the said John Wyclif, or since then, or that may in future be composed, in part or in whole, publicly or privately.' The inhibition is to remain in place until such time as a translation is approved by the diocesan bishop or by a provincial council: in the event, it remained in place in all dioceses until 1529." Mary Dove notes that Wyclif's name appears in a letter written by Arundel to Pope John XXIII in 1412: "Arundel believed that [...] 'the pestilent and wretched John Wyclif, of cursed memory, son of the old serpent ... endeavoured by every means to attack the very faith and sacred doctrine of holy church, devising, to fill up the measure of his malice, the expedient of a new translation of the scriptures into the mother-tongue.'" For the translation of the section of the *Constitutions* and Arundel's letter, see Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: the Text and Context of the Wycliffite Versions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35.

<sup>115</sup> Aston writes: "The questions asked of heretics in individual cases show that possession or reading of vernacular texts became a leading criterion. Was the suspect familiar with heretics, or did he or she have books in English containing error? Simply to be a reader of English became in certain circumstances and among certain sorts of people potentially incriminating. Literacy pointed an accusing finger towards heresy" (Aston 207).



One of the questions that still surrounds Wyclif and the Lollards is the connection between the two and how it was propagated. The fact that he was an Oxford scholar who wrote exclusively in Latin is a problem when trying to link his works to a lay audience or at least a Latin-illiterate one. Speculation that Wyclif himself commissioned and educated preachers is, so far, unfounded, although evidence exists of learned men who brought Wyclif's message to their congregations.<sup>116</sup> What control Wyclif had over these men is still unclear, but there is no question that they agreed with many of his thoughts at least for a while. His words may have connected to these preachers through the creation of a text that served as a compendium of his thoughts, mixed in with the thoughts of Church Fathers, in both Latin and English created specifically for preachers who were writing sermons to be delivered to the laity. Wycliffite thought may also have connected to a broader audience by the inclusion, whether intentionally or by ignorance, in orthodox works like Rolle's *Psalter* or Thoresby's *Catechism*.

The fact that heresy could be spread to the laity textually in England was a relatively new phenomenon at the end of the fourteenth century. Thanks to the two movements already described – Rolle's eremitic writings and Thoresby's attempts to educate the laity through his *Catechism* – members of the clergy charged with protecting against heresy had to be prepared in ways that had no

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<sup>116</sup> Aston discusses the question of how Wyclif's thoughts may have been disseminated among the laity. She states that there is no evidence of Lollard preachers being commissioned by Wyclif, as earlier scholars had suggested, and though there is some evidence that groups of men (led by Hereford, Aston, Alington, and Bedman) formed missions to spread Wyclif's thoughts before his death, that there is no proof that Wyclif organized them (Aston 13).

meaning in the strictly Latin scholarship of the centuries before. I assert that the transmission of Wyclif's thought to the laity through the inclusion of his thought in orthodox works was a new challenge that required new methods on the part of clergymen like the Yorkshire circle. This challenge is the prime motivation for the methods used in the writing of the works that are the focus of this dissertation, especially M.N.'s translation of the *Mirror*. With an interest in theology and the eremitic lifestyle already present in the laity, Wyclif's thought on subjects as diverse as secular and clerical dominion, the sacraments, and the role of women in preaching presented a challenge to priests trying to maintain order in a rapidly changing world.

Margaret Aston discusses the *Rosarium sive Floretus Minor*, an encyclopedia of biblical and theological passages arranged alphabetically by subject for easy use in creating sermons.<sup>117</sup> Oddly, the book contains a large number of quotations from Wyclif's work. This collection appeared originally in Latin, but there exists one manuscript of a Middle English translation. Aston writes,

The purpose of the translation cannot be doubted: to make the material available to the large number of Lollard sympathizers, including the lower clergy, whose only language was English. In this version, as in the Latin *Rosarium*, the reader is struck particularly by the preponderance of

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<sup>117</sup> "The English manuscripts, eighteen in all, fall roughly into three groups: a full version, containing some 509 entries and generally entitled *Floretum*; an intermediate version, containing the same number of entries but with their content altered and somewhat reduced, called, when given a title, *Rosarium sive Floretus Minor* (hereafter described as 'Intermediate' version); thirdly, a reduced version, containing some 303 entries only, many of which are shortened in comparison with the foregoing two versions, and generally entitled *Rosarium*" (Aston 14-15).

material from canon law, cleverly cited to turn the instrument of the ecclesiastical hierarchy against its makers.<sup>118</sup>

The availability of Wyclif-shaded authority in an easy-to-use form may explain why Lollard-tinged ideas might seem to appear even in orthodox works.<sup>119</sup> This would have made the task of sorting heresy from orthodoxy difficult, especially among the lower clergy and the Latin illiterate laity. Christina von Nolcken, who has created a partial edition of the *Rosarium* adds,

The *Rosarium* shows that during the early history of Lollardy, views could be expressed within the orthodox tradition which were neither extreme nor disruptive, in a text which we nevertheless have good evidence to class as Wycliffite. Its MSS show that this tradition continued until well into the fifteenth century, and more and more texts are appearing to suggest that this moderate part of the movement was of considerable importance also until well into the fifteenth century.<sup>120</sup>

The fact that Wyclif's words could be used in moderation and seen as orthodox, or at least not heretical enough to be questioned, suggests one reason why his work would have proliferated even after the condemnation of his ideas in 1382, and may explain a lot about the proliferation of other condemned works.

More important than the effect Wyclif's own words might have had is the effect his writings had in creating suspicions around texts that were already

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<sup>118</sup> Aston 24.

<sup>119</sup> Nolcken notes that while most of the Wyclif passages chosen are not of a controversial nature, they are of a particularly Lollard nature. She states that in the *Rosarium*, "only those under *Fabulacio*, *Religio*, and *Ymago* can be said in any way to touch on current controversy." Christina von Nolcken, *The Middle English Translation of the Rosarium Theologie* (Heidelberg, Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1979), 28.

<sup>120</sup> Nolcken 42.

considered orthodox. For example, Rolle's *Psalter* and Thoresby's *Lay Folks' Catechism* have been suspected by both modern and contemporary scholars of being re-written to include Lollard sentiments.<sup>121</sup> In Hudson's examination of the *Catechism* as it appears in Lambeth 408, she finds evidence of Lollard tampering co-existing with sentiments clearly counter to the Lollard temperament.<sup>122</sup> While

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<sup>121</sup> In his description of the concerns surrounding Lollard copies of Rolle's *Psalter*, for example, Michael P. Kuczynski describes how a contemporary copyist tries to edit out what he considers to be Lollard additions to the work: "But its author's more immediate purpose was polemical: to juxtapose Rolle's orthodoxy and Lollard heresy, in order to stabilize the text of Rolle's *Psalter*. It is ironic, given this aim, that the preface introduces a revised copy of Rolle – not one usually classified with the Lollard versions but one containing non-authorial material. The grounds, in other words, for the author's distinction between what was Rolle's and what was not must have been general rather than specific, a scent in the wind rather than a careful comparison of the readings in various manuscript copies of the *Psalter*. The tone of the preface, finally, tells us as much as the content and as much about its author's aims as about the work of Rolle's revisers" (Kuczynski 180). But Kuczynski also gives an example of how that confusion persists in modern scholarship with a passage that describes "the faithful priest" which is understood by Dorothy Everett – another Rolle scholar – to be of Lollard origins because it contains a description of itinerancy that matches the image of a Lollard priest. But itinerant priests were certainly not a hallmark belonging solely to Lollardy. Kuczynski states that "Everett often takes the appearance of Lollardy for its reality" (Kuczynski 183).

<sup>122</sup> Lambeth 408 — the manuscript that Nolloth and Simmons use as their Lollard version of the *Catechism*— has an added Latin opening which promises a forty-day indulgence from Archbishop Thoresby to any who read and study the *Catechism*. Anne Hudson points out that the Lollards did not believe in such things as indulgences or seeking the intercession of prayer for the relieving of souls in purgatory, making the notion of Lollard authorship seem unlikely. She also cites the sections on the Eucharist and confession as being beliefs that do not agree with Lollard sentiments. Hudson does point out three passages that are almost certainly of Wycliffite origin — one of which includes both a specific reference to priests who desire to be buried in their habits so as to retain the appearance of holiness and a reference to the requirements of confession and absolution. Both of these references have little explanation beyond being of Lollard origin (Hudson, "New Look," 254-255) Hudson also notes that the addition of the material on the three prayers — the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria,

it has been suggested that Thoresby's *Catechism* was re-constructed and further explained by Wyclif himself with Thorseby's approval, it is more likely that the followers of Wyclif contributed Lollard interpretations when creating their own copies, thus muddling the orthodoxy of the texts. Hudson concludes her paper by saying,

Lambeth [...] does not even properly belong to that 'grey area' between conservative Lollardy and radical orthodoxy, an area occupied by texts such as *Dives and Pauper*. It simply lacks any kind of theological consistency.<sup>123</sup>

The question of whether the additions are merely an echo of older sentiments concerning the priesthood made by a lazy copyist or actual heresy may have been as important an issue at the end of the fourteenth century as it is to an understanding today of what kind of theological ideas were being transmitted and why.

Michael P. Kuczynski takes up the question of the so-called Lollard versions of Rolle's *Psalter* and how modern scholars can discern Lollard thought in otherwise orthodox texts. He warns that not all that seems to be infused with Lollard sympathies may be of Lollard construction, simply because the line

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and the Creed, as mentioned above — may simply be the addition by the scribe of materials that were thought to be lacking. While the first two prayers are taken directly from the Gospels, it is odd that the Creed would be included in a Lollard work, since it is an elaboration of the faith as designated by later Christians and confirmed at the Council of Nicaea in 325 in an effort to defeat Arianism. Also in the section on the Ave Maria, Hudson points to a passage about the offer of an indulgence for adding the words "Maria Jesus" to the prayer, in which the author speaks against the pope changing "Godys lawe into lawe of antechrist," suggesting that this indicates at least a Lollard manuscript from which the scribe might have been writing (Hudson, "New Look," 257).

<sup>123</sup> Hudson, "New Look" 258.

between what is Lollard and what is orthodox is not clear, even to the translators and copyists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He begins with the metrical prologue from one of the copies of the *Psalter* in which the copyist accuses other editions of the work of heresy.<sup>124</sup> Kuczynski addresses the “scandal” of heretical versions of orthodox texts when he writes,

“Many of the scandalous aspects of these copies are, however, quite orthodox, in that they derive from traditional attitudes toward the Psalms encouraged by the standard Latin commentators – Augustine, Peter Lombard, and Nicholas Lyra. Moreover it is demonstrable that some of the anonymous interpolators of Rolle’s work viewed their efforts not as propagandist revision but as extensions of Rolle’s own method, which is based in a profound identification with the emotionally-charged language of the Psalms.”<sup>125</sup>

Again, what is heretical is not always clear, especially when some of the Lollard concerns – about a suspect and lazy priesthood or about interpreting the words of the Bible – predate Wyclif and come from earlier orthodox writers.

In both Rolle’s *Psalter* and the Archbishop’s *Catechism*, it can become too easy to see Lollardy in the text, simply because the texts themselves were written in some ways to respond to the rising discontent that would ultimately culminate in Lollardy. In translating the *Psalter*, Rolle provides his unlearned audience a chance to read the Bible firsthand — this would eventually become a hallmark of the Lollard tradition and so in some ways, any work of translation, particularly

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<sup>124</sup> The metrical prologue to Richard Rolle’s *Psalter* and Commentary in Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 286 contains these accusatory lines: “Copyed has this Sauter ben, of yuel men of lollardry;/ And aftirward hit has bene sene, ympyed in wih eresye./ They seyden then to leude foles, that it shuld be all enter,/ A blessed boke of hur scoles, of Richard Hampole the Sauter” (Kuczynski 177).

<sup>125</sup> Kuczynski 178.

those that have any Biblical content, could be seen to have Lollard tendencies. By the end of the fourteenth century the motivations of any translator, or of anyone trying to write for a lay or Latin-illiterate audience, would have been seen as suspect and therefore would need the extra touch of the glossator to point out the orthodox reasons for the work at hand. The same could also be said for any work that criticizes priests. But the very fact that there is confusion about which is the orthodox text and whose version is free from error in both the *Psalter* and in the *Catechism* may explain why we now find copies of works that seem to have both Lollard and orthodox tendencies. As books made their way from one copyist to another in various stages of corruption in the text, it became a matter for the copyist to figure out what should be excluded or added. The fact that M.N. found himself having to re-translate his text of the *Mirror* with the understanding that the exemplar that he used had faults and mistakes, seems linked to the problem of separating Lollardy from orthodoxy, which, even in the midst of the controversy, was not clear-cut by any means.<sup>126</sup>

The main reason for including Wyclif in this study is that the Yorkshire circle of writers created their works not simply to confound Lollardy or to attack heresy, but, more important, to try and separate the false beliefs that were infused into orthodox texts as these works were translated and re-copied. The primary goal of the Yorkshire writers was to help guide lay readers through possible misunderstandings created by these translations of deep spiritual material, which

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<sup>126</sup> M.N.'s prologue is unclear as to whether he used a second exemplar for the creation of his new translation.

lacked the guides and glosses of the theologians that had been built up since Jerome's translation and exegeses and were pursued by readers whose education could no longer be assumed.

These three trends — to teach others how to experience eremitic contemplation, to teach the laity the foundational beliefs of their religion, and to protect against heresy as defined by those in power — though often contradictory, intersect in the literature of the last two decades of the fourteenth century. All three helped form a textual community that included the Yorkshire writers, in that each trend caused an upswing in literacy and an interest in theological matters among the laity, but each had a negative side that later writers, like those examined in the next chapter, would try to correct through their own writing. I argue that this textual community was fostered on Rolle's notion that true contemplation belonged not only to the literate or the studious, and on the failure of his canonization process. It was encouraged by Archbishop Thorseby's attempt to school his flock in the foundational elements of Christian beliefs, and the debate over the meaning of beliefs, and over what should be translated and by whom. It was challenged by Wycliffite fundamentalism, which created a demand for devotional literature, and his dismissal in 1382 and eventual condemnation as a heretic. These contradictions would make navigating these texts difficult for those operating within the Church's teachings, a state nominally understood as orthodoxy. The community of writers that became the core of the Yorkshire circle dealt with these contradictions carefully, warning against over-enthusiasm while



encouraging the discipline required for a life of contemplation that could be practiced by members of the laity.

Rolle's own advice of concentrating on the names of Jesus and Mary and meditating strictly on the human life of Jesus, rather than trying to decipher such divine manifestations as the Trinity, proved to be a cornerstone of the Yorkshire circle, even while writers like Walter Hilton and the *Cloud*-author were warning against his description of the physical manifestations of union with God — *calor*, *dulcor*, and *canor*. This circle of writers would extol the beauty of a life of contemplation while at the same time grounding such a life in the active world.

Translation also lies at the center of this textual community. By controlling how the works were translated, each of the Yorkshire circle of writers could help educate the growing number of students of contemplation, satisfying the demand without surrendering the control of the texts. While there is very little direct evidence that the laity was reading works of contemplation in translation, there are examples of laws written to question those who were suspected of reading devotional works in English.<sup>127</sup> In the next chapter, the power of the translator to control the difficulty of the documents translated is explored. By re-organization and the addition of key explanations, primers of difficult texts could

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<sup>127</sup> For example, Mary Dove, in her description of the ownership of the Wyclif Bible notes that “[i]n 1416, Archbishop Henry Chichele directed the Bishop of London to publish a ‘statute against heretics’, requiring bishops and archdeacons to ‘enquire diligently at least twice a year about people suspected of heresy’ because they attended conventicles, stood out from the usual run of the faithful in their way of life, professed errors or heretical opinions, or owned ‘libros suspectos in lingua vulgari anglicana conscriptos’ (‘suspect books written in the common tongue, English’). See Dove 56.

be offered to the less educated, and may explain why M.N. found it so important to demarcate his glosses in the text.

Lollard and other heterodox perspectives became codified in a way that made them easier to identify and challenge. Though the appearance of the *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* in the public arena in 1395 would allow Church leaders to take a more direct approach to blocking the spread of Wycliffite thought, Wyclif's teachings had been worked into sermons and texts and had already reached a wide audience in the last two decades of the fourteenth century. Correcting this required care on the part of the Yorkshire writers.

In order to feed this community and keep it protected from what they perceived as the disease of heresy, the Yorkshire writers would deliver and comment on difficult treatises of devotional contemplation in a manner easily digested by their unprepared audiences. The question of why a book like the *Mirror* would have been deemed worthy of translation is a difficult one to answer, but it may have been part of the learning process in the changing understanding of what was dangerous in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. M.N.'s second translation of the book seems like an attempt to correct an error in judgment in creating the first.<sup>128</sup>

While each of the Yorkshire men discussed in the next chapter dealt with their own groups of students seeking to understand contemplation and how it

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<sup>128</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton suggests that while M.N. was clearly aware of the dangers of heresy in the *Mirror* by the second translation, as evidenced in his glosses, perhaps he had not been at the time of his first translation. (Kerby-Fulton 262).

could fit into their daily lives, they share the common concern with careful education forged by these three movements. Each seeks to open the door of contemplation wide enough to admit acolytes, while admonishing them to not go beyond their preparation. Whether they worked in concert or not, each approached bringing the life of contemplation to a wider audience with a great joy, but also with great reservation forged by their perception of the dangers of fundamentalism, rebellion, and over-enthusiasm. The traditional methods of schooling young clerics in the life of contemplation was over, and new methods had to be found – new methods that would allow the impatient and unlearned to achieve quickly what in previous generations would have been a life-long pursuit.

The four writers described in the next chapter – Walter Hilton, the anonymous authors of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Chastising of God's Children*, and Nicholas Love – had to be both teachers of orthodoxy and reformers prepared to lead a new class of student down difficult pathways. I argue that the similarities among the works makes these writers a circle that share the same goals and the same methods, a circle that includes M.N. and his translation of Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer des Simples Ames*.

## Chapter 3

### THE YORKSHIRE CIRCLE

Thomas Arundel, who would become the Archbishop of Canterbury at the end of the fourteenth century was instrumental in forging the Yorkshire circle of writers discussed in this chapter. They might not have worked in concert, but their writings show enough similarities to indicate that they were employing a particular strategy in order to educate the laity, translate works of contemplation, and clear dangerous seeds of heresy from the works: the three trends, discussed in the previous chapter, that had been building throughout the fourteenth century. This chapter examines the strategies used by these writers in order to show that the techniques used by M.N. in his translation of the *Mirouer des Simples Ames* are similar to those used by this group of writers. By connecting M.N.'s methods to the methods of the Yorkshire circle, M.N.'s *Mirror* is revealed as belonging to the end of the fourteenth century, not only removing Michael Northburgh from contention as the translator, but also making M.N.'s motivations for translating and glossing the *Mirouer* more understandable.

In 1373, the year that John Thoresby died, Thomas Arundel, a very young man — only twenty years of age — was appointed to the see at Ely. Arundel, the brother of the Earl of Arundel, Richard FitzAlan, using his royal connections, followed in the footsteps of Thoresby by being both a devout clergyman and a well-respected politician. His career was similar to that of Thoresby as he served in both political and clerical positions, developing friendships through his university connections as well. Similarities can also be seen in the tight-knit circle

of followers he built around himself to help administer the Ely bishopric. He gathered his men from Cambridge University — more specifically Peterhouse — and saw to it that, as his own power grew, these men took over positions of authority around him.<sup>129</sup> During Arundel's tenure at Ely, Alexander Neville (d. 1392) served as the Archbishop of York, where he quickly undid all of the teaching and controls that Thoresby had implemented, retreating from the difficult work of educating the laity and keeping the peace and allowing his bishopric to fall into chaos. In 1388, he was removed from York and Arundel took his place.<sup>130</sup> Arundel brought his circle of followers from Ely to help him restore Thoresby's vision in York, a circle that would last into the first half of the fifteenth century and whose teachings and writings would help shape the Church in York until the Dissolution in the sixteenth century. Arundel began a crusade against ignorance and injustice through a powerful consistory court founded on

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<sup>129</sup> Hughes includes Walter Hilton among the men who served with Arundel at Ely — Hilton served in the consistory courts at Ely during Arundel's tenure. Among other notables were Richard Scrope, who would be Archbishop of York from 1398 until his execution for treason in 1405; Henry Bowet (d. 1423), who followed Scrope as Archbishop of York in 1407; and Thomas Fishlake (dates unknown), a Carmelite friar who translated Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* into Latin, and who had connections to Thoresby. Hughes suggests that Arundel's connections might have linked him to the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, although the connection seems rather tenuous (Hughes 182-183).

<sup>130</sup> Neville's damage among his colleagues and his subjects was so severe that when he was "translated in disgrace to the Avignon see at St. Andrews, there had been, not only a deterioration in the fabric of some of the archbishop's buildings, but a breakdown in the exercise of the patronage and diplomatic tact that was necessary for the effective administration of the diocese. Such matters were an embarrassment when seen against the larger issues of the Papal Schism and lollard criticisms of the church" (Hughes 177).

the Peterhouse reputation for canon law.<sup>131</sup> His interest in eradicating what he saw as heresy found its fruition after he reached his next position as Archbishop of Canterbury. There, he worked directly with the newly crowned Henry IV to enact legislation, both secular and clerical, against heresy in the creation of *De heretico comburendo* in 1401 and then set out to block the transmission of heresy in literary form by creating his *Constitutions* in 1410, which required that all works of theology pass through his office before being permitted publication.<sup>132</sup>

Arundel and the Peterhouse circle of men brought with them an interest in the works of Richard Rolle and in works of contemplation, such as Henry Suso's *Horologium Sapientiae*, as documented by the books he and his followers would

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<sup>131</sup> Hughes suggests that Hilton may have been among the Peterhouse circle of lawyers Arundel kept close and may have been connected through a colleague named Thomas Gloucester who was appointed as Arundel's deputy official in Ely. Hughes ends his assessment of Hilton's connection to the Peterhouse group with: "What can be stated with reasonable certainty is that Hilton belonged to this society of northern clerks from North Lincolnshire and Yorkshire who enjoyed the patronage of Thoresby at Oxford and Arundel at Cambridge" (Hughes 181).

<sup>132</sup> It is in connection with the *Constitutions* that Hughes numbers Nicholas Love among Arundel's circle. "Discussion between the two men on this subject [the writing of *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*] may have occurred in 1409 when Arundel joined the Mount Grace fraternity: Love's completed work was dedicated to 'some devout soules', a description that would fit the lay fraternity of the house" (Hughes 231). Michael Sargent challenges this connection as unprovable, but adds "In this case, as Vincent Gillespie has observed of the conjunction of contemplative sources with a secular intended audience in the *Cibus Anime* and the *Speculum Christiani*, the coincidence of outlook between the Carthusians of Mount Grace and the secular clergy of York cathedral can be quite important in itself." Michael Sargent, *Nicholas Love's Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Critical Edition Based on Cambridge University Library Additional MSS 6578 and 6686*, (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), xxv.

leave to York and the churches around Yorkshire.<sup>133</sup> Since they were bound by their education, rather than by a specific order or religious group, the interests of this circle have a range of influence. Carthusian, Franciscan, and Augustinian influences as well as eremitic philosophy are blended in this circle as they attempted to slow the spread of Lollardy and control the rise of interest in contemplation among the laity. The men who followed Arundel as Archbishop of York, Richard Scrope and Henry Bowet, friends of Arundel's, would continue to ensure that these principles and these goals would be followed into the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

From this circle come at least two of the four writers whose works may offer an understanding of M.N.'s motivations for translating Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer* at this particular time, Walter Hilton and Nicholas Love. The anonymous authors of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Chastising of God's Children* may well have come from this same circle, but it is difficult to make a direct connection to Thomas Arundel.<sup>134</sup> However, all four share certain traits important to the work done in York, as established in the first chapter, above: the translation of important works of theology, specifically ones dealing with contemplation; the

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<sup>133</sup> Hughes demonstrates a connection between Richard Scrope and Margaret Kirkeby, Richard Rolle's student and supporter, and suggests that Scrope may have introduced several of Rolle's works and "other northern works" to Arundel's circle, including Hilton. Suso's (d. 1366) work was left to Arundel by Sir William Thorpe, a member of Arundel's household at Ely, and is important because it shows an interest in this circle in works of contemplation by a student of Meister Eckhart (d. 1327), a Continental writer who survived an accusation of heresy and whose works have some similarities to Marguerite Porete's. (Hughes 202-205).

<sup>134</sup> Possibilities are Hilton, through Arundel's Ely connections, and Love through Arundel's Mount Grace connections. See notes 131 and 132 above.

education of the laity in a life of contemplation; and providing guidance in dealing with the Bible and the writings of Church Fathers.

Each of the works considered in this dissertation has a relationship to M.N.'s translation of Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*. Walter Hilton and M.N. share a specific image that will be discussed in detail in the third chapter. The *Cloud of Unknowing* and M.N.'s *Mirror* were both translated into Latin by Richard Methley in 1491 at the Mount Grace Charterhouse, a major link for both works to the Carthusian order. The *Chastising of God's Children* is related in two ways: the first is that the works appear together as the only contents of MS Bodley 505; the second is that while Marguerite Porete's book was seen as a founding work for the so-called Heresy of the Free Spirit on the Continent, many scholars suggest that the *Chastising* contains specific warnings against this heresy.<sup>135</sup> The fact that this warning about a Continental heresy appears in an English work has been used to support the scholarly argument that the heresy arrived in England, contrary to previously accepted ideas that England was isolated from Continental heresies.<sup>136</sup> Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* shares a glossing style with M.N.'s translation, which may seem a

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<sup>135</sup> Robert Lerner reiterates Henry Charles Lea's verdict, calling Marguerite Porete "the first apostle in France of the German sect of Brethren of the Free Spirit" (Lerner, *Heresy*, 1).

<sup>136</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton argues that warnings against earlier heresies would have been consulted when dealing with new ones, and "so English officials and controversialists would have reconsulted the Clementine and Johannine legislation [*Ad Nostrum* and *Cum de quibusdam mulieribus*] not only in the early, confusing days of the rise of Wycliffism, but also prior to this [...]" (Kerby-Fulton 263).



minor point, but the rarity of this glossing style is important in connecting these two works in a period in which any additions made by a translator to a text might be seen as suspect by copyists or devout readers.

In this chapter, the textual community formed by these four authors, their works in Yorkshire at the end of the fourteenth century, and their relevance to the works discussed in the previous chapter is explored. Showing how they interconnect and serve as a logical outgrowth from the earlier Yorkshire writers illuminates how and why M.N.'s translation fits into this time and location.

### 1. Walter Hilton

Walter Hilton (d. 1396), an Augustinian canon at Thurgarton during the last two decades of the fourteenth century, is important to this study in three respects which can each be seen in his most memorable works: he was a translator interested in works that show the humanity and the passion of Christ, which can be seen in his translation of the *Stimulus Amoris*, a pseudo-Bonaventuran work; he wrote works of contemplation for women, which can best be seen in the first book of his *Scale of Perfection*, written for an anchoress; and he wrote treatises to promote contemplation among the laity, which can best be seen in his *Mixed Life*, addressed to a nobleman urging him to not surrender his responsibilities in order to become a contemplative, but to work on experiencing moments of contemplation in his active life.<sup>137</sup> Hilton also wrote several important letters to

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<sup>137</sup> *Mixed Life* 8-10.

various students just entering the religious life that were later copied for wider distribution.<sup>138</sup> This understudied theologian gives a real insight into both the Yorkshire circle of writers and the response to the Wycliffite criticism of the clergy that seems to affect nearly all facets of literature during this crucial period in the Church. Though not much is known about his personal life, he was educated at Cambridge. From his letters, it seems likely that he pursued a life of contemplation as a hermit during the 1370s, but failed and returned to a more active life. Thomas Arundel, while Archbishop of York, made Walter Hilton part of his circle in order to work against the rise of Lollardy, a matter addressed in many of Hilton's writings.<sup>139</sup> He was able to retreat to Thurgarton in the middle of the 1380s, and most of his writing seems to come from the period that follows until his death in 1396 — his last work, the second book of the *Scale of Perfection* may have even been written in his last year.

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<sup>138</sup> John Clark and Cheryl Taylor's *Walter Hilton's Latin Writings (Analecta Cartusiana* Salzburg: Institut Für Anglistik and Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1987), contains six Latin letters and one Middle English translation of the Latin letter *Epistola ad Quendam Seculo Renunciare Volentem (A Pystille Made to a Cristene Frende)*. *Epistola de Leccione, Intencione, Oracione, Meditacione et Aliis* was also translated into modern English by Joy Russell-Smith for the journal *The Way*. This letter specifically warns: "Therefore any heretic who condemns the institution of the Church, and deliberately omits the canonical hours, is wrong, for he does not acknowledge the Church or her faith," and continues with a warning to "the contemplative who thinks he has obtained the spirit of liberty, and who omits the canonical hours as if from zeal for greater perfection, considering that he pleases God better by his meditation apart than by the prayer ordained from the Church: he has 'a certain zeal, but not according to knowledge'" (Joy Russell-Smith, "Text: A Letter to a Hermit," *The Way*, (July 1966), 238). This seems to be a specific reference to Wyclif's denial of Church authority and ritual, but with a reference to the "spirit of liberty."

<sup>139</sup> See note 131 above.

Hilton's life as a recluse and as an Augustinian did not stop him from communicating with people in other orders and other modes of life. In Hilton's *Epistola de Utilitate et Prerogativis Religionis* he urges the recruit, a young Carthusian at Beauvale named Adam Horsley, to work hard in the contemplative life, to surrender to the teachings, to try not to control them for his own understanding, and to accept the fact that there are things that he will never know.<sup>140</sup> This connection with the Carthusians may explain why they so valued Hilton's treatises and letters, many of which were preserved throughout the following century and kept in Carthusian libraries.<sup>141</sup> Hilton also has a connection with the Carmelites through Thomas Fishlake, who translated Hilton's *Scale* into Latin, possibly as early as 1400; it was one of the few books that would be brought from England back to the Continent to be read and preserved for many years.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> The Beauvale priory is very close to the Thurgarton monastery where Hilton spent the last years of his life. The letter is thought to have been written before 1386 when Horsley resigned his position as an official in the Exchequer of the king's service, and perhaps demonstrates some political connections for Hilton (Clark and Dorward 14-16).

<sup>141</sup> Clark and Dorward write: "There are forty-five extant English manuscripts of *Scale* 1 known, as against only twenty-six of *Scale* 2. Both books were read and copied in Charterhouses during the fifteenth century; James Grenehalgh, a Carthusian of Sheen, is known to have annotated three manuscripts as well as a copy of the first printed edition. This last he gave to a Briggitine nun, Joanna Sewell, probably on the occasion of her profession at the Briggitine convent of Syon in 1500" (Clark and Dorward 33).

<sup>142</sup> Fishlake was a Bachelor of Divinity at Cambridge around 1375. "The translation shows a sensitivity to the deep roots of Hilton's English terminology in Latin theology, so that Latin equivalents are chosen to convey the appropriate nuances and connotations. At the same time, this is not a 'learned' translation.

Hilton was highly regarded among the laity as well. One of the most prominent contemporary appearances of his work is in Margery Kempe's *Book*, where he is mentioned three times.<sup>143</sup> Kempe was far from being a recluse or any sort of privileged religious, so the fact that she had access to Hilton's books seems to indicate that his works were not made for the sole viewing of his order. Many works about educating the laity about the contemplative life, including the still-anonymous *Cloud of Unknowing*, have been ascribed to Hilton.<sup>144</sup>

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Where Hilton is citing ecclesiastical writers, as distinct from the Bible, Fishlake makes no effort to seek out the Latin originals of Hilton's quotations" (Clark and Dorward 57). The circulation of Fishlake's translation is noted in Bestul's introduction to his edition of the *Scale* (Clark and Dorward 57 note 16).

<sup>143</sup> In Chapter 17, Margery Kempe mentions that God tells her things "how sche xuld lofe hym, worshepyn hym, & dredyn hym, so excellently *that* sche her neuyr boke, neythyr Hyltons boke, ne Bridis boke, ne Stimulus Amoris, ne Incendium Amoris..." (39) She repeats this list in Chapter 58, when she prayed to God for a priest to teach her "Goddys word," and a priest from Lynn sent for her to come and listen to him read. "He red to hir many a good boke of hy contemplacyon & other bokys, as *the* Bybyl with doctowrys *ther*-up-on, Seynt Brydys boke, Hyltons boke, Bone-ventur, Stimulus Amoris, Incendium Amoris, & swech *other*" (143). It is not clear whether she heard these books in Latin, but as the notes in the Meech and Allen edition point out, "because it appears from the passage beginning at 112/34 that Margery could not understand Latin when it was spoken," it is likely that she was read the English translations (276). However, the problem is that she also mentions the *Incendium Amoris*, which was not translated until 1433-1434. What is telling however is that in the third mention of the *Stimulus Amoris*, on page 153, she calls the work "*The Prykke of Lofe*," Hilton's title for his translation, and she quotes from Chapter II of the work in English (154) – in defense of her weeping – in a manner that is similar to the passage from Hilton's translation. All page numbers are from Sanford Brown Meech and Hope Emily Allen (eds.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>144</sup> James Grenehalgh, a Carthusian at Sheen assumed that the author of the *Cloud* was Walter Hilton, according to James Walsh. Phyllis Hodgson lays out the arguments both for and against in "Walter Hilton and the 'Cloud of Unknowing':

Hilton is also credited for his work in translating the *Stimulus Amoris*, a book initially attributed to Bonaventure, but which is now attributed to another Franciscan from the end of the thirteenth century, James of Milan. The translation of the *Stimulus Amoris*, or *The Pricking of Love* exists in sixteen manuscripts (ten complete copies and six partial ones).<sup>145</sup> It appears with the *Chastising of God's Children* at least twice and with Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* once.

In Clare Kirchberger's introduction to the *Goad of Love*, her 1952 modernization of the text, she describes the changes Hilton made to the Latin original, demonstrating his interest in making the book more accessible to a non-contemplative audience.<sup>146</sup> He eliminates many of the passages that condemn worldly life and emphasizes passages explaining that one may contemplate the life of Christ by dealing with the struggles that occur in daily life. "In Chapter

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A Problem of Authorship Reconsidered," *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 50, No. 4, Oct. (1955): 395-406.

<sup>145</sup> None of the sixteen appears to be an autograph copy, and as Harold Kane notes, all contain lacunae that indicate they may be even further than one generation from the original. Many are from the early fifteenth century and though many belong to religious houses, a few bear indications that they were in private hands, and even have inscriptions by lay female owners, which indicate an interest beyond the clergy. See Harold Kane (ed.), *The Prickynge of Love, Volume I*, (Salzburg: Institut Für Anglistik and Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1983), iii-xiv.

<sup>146</sup> There is no readily available edition of the Latin *Stimulus Amoris* and so I will rely on Clare Kirchberger's assessment of the changes made by Walter Hilton in his translation. Clare Kirchberger (ed.), *The Goad of Love: An Unpublished Translation of the Stimulus Amoris, Formerly Attributed to St. Bonaventura*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1952).

XVI the *Stimulus* discusses how ‘in all his doings a man may be contemplative’ and makes the point that the more a man is united to God, so much the more is he united to his fellow-men, so that the life of Martha and Mary become one and the service of the poor and sick can but increase our love to Christ.”<sup>147</sup> Among the examples she cites of his additions to the Latin is, “ ‘Therefore thou that wouldest be a spouse of Jesus Christ, I shall tell thee where thou mayst find him, not in the midday only but in thy sick brother that is crooked and blind and diseased’ (Ch. XVI, p.127).”<sup>148</sup> By calling for active works of mercy, even among the contemplatives, Hilton lays the groundwork for his *Mixed Life*, a work he wrote for a nobleman who was considering abandoning his active life for a monastery.

Kirchberger also notes that Hilton de-emphasizes union with God, making various passages focus more on sharing in the life of Christ. Kirchberger also notes that the change to a more Christocentric language can be seen in the re-writes of the first book of the *Scale of Perfection*.<sup>149</sup> She also notes that Hilton qualifies the feelings of oneness with God, particularly the “sweetness” that is reminiscent of Rolle’s physical manifestations of divine union, by warning that while one still has human senses, they can be deceived. “The dangers of illusion with regard to this sweetness are impressed in the original text, but here Hilton makes his own interpretation. He adds, “as long as man hath mind of himself and

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<sup>147</sup> Kirchberger, *Goad*, 38.

<sup>148</sup> Kirchberger, *Goad*, 39.

<sup>149</sup> Kirchberger, *Goad*, 26.

feeling and using of his wits he may be deceived, unless he be ware and well advised [...]"<sup>150</sup> One of the several passages Kirchberger cites to demonstrate the changes is, "Though this sweetness be of Christ, it is not Christ and therefore aye cleave to Christ and hang on him and suffer the sweetness, if it will cleave to thee and hang on thee...." This last is important, because it echoes how other authors in the Yorkshire circle delineated Rolle's experience of unity with God from the concept of *deificatio* that seemed so dangerous to the fourteenth-century mind.

In his translation of this revered text, Hilton makes the book more suitable to a wider audience of active religious and pious laity. By providing guidance for attempts to reach a life of unity with God, he opens the path to others who do not have the resources or the education to completely shut out their worldly lives, fulfilling a desire among the non-clerical readers inspired by Rolle's English writings and the desire of Lollards to have some control of their religious destiny. But he also makes the desire for unity with God more individual and therefore more possible. Jennifer Bryan writes,

Here, mystical discourse becomes almost its obverse: a discourse developed to encourage the erasure of particular identity becomes instead a language of intense border anxieties. In translation, the fantasy of self-annihilation solidifies the boundaries of the self, effecting not a toppling over into the blind stirring of enlightened love, but a recognition instead of inevitable rejection, uncertainty, and longing.<sup>151</sup>

Instead of the mystical surrender to Christ and his suffering, there is concern over

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<sup>150</sup> Kirchberger, *Goad*, 31.

<sup>151</sup> Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 133.

what to do when the connection to God has passed. This separation from God is explored in the *Cloud of Unknowing*, the *Chastising of God's Children*, and in M.N.'s glosses to the *Mirror*, and is discussed in those sections below.

Aside from his translation work, Hilton offered advice in his own books. Like many of the spiritual manuals that came before, Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* teaches the reader to achieve the highest life – that of contemplation – in several stages. Like Richard Rolle's English works, Hilton's were made for a woman, in this case an unidentified anchoress. The first part of the *Scale* – hereafter called *Scale 1* – begins with a description of the active and contemplative lives and shows how one may move from stage to stage to reach the highest levels of contemplation. The description of the active life is very short, with a synopsis of good works, and ends with: "Thise werkes, though thei ben actif, not for thi they helpen mykel and ordaynen a man in the bigynnyng to come to contemplatif lif, yif thei ben usid bi discrecion" (40-41).<sup>152</sup> The next seven chapters discuss the various levels of contemplation, which would seem to focus the book on the clergy. But Hilton describes three stages of contemplation, and while the first belongs to cloistered men who study the Scriptures, but are "withouten goostli affeccion and inward savour feelid bi the special gift of the Hooli Goost" (57-58), and part of the second level and the third level are reserved for those who have dedicated their lives to contemplation, Hilton argues that the lower half of the

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<sup>152</sup> All quotations from Hilton's *Scale* are from Thomas Bestul (ed.), *The Scale of Perfection*, (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000) which can be found at <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/hilintro.htm>. Line numbers will follow the text.



second level can be achieved by men of the active life who have been granted the grace of God.<sup>153</sup> Before Hilton moves away from the discussion of the various levels of contemplation, he reminds his readers that “though a man which is actif have the gifte of it bi a special grace, neverthelees the ful use of it as I hoope may no man have, but he be solitarie and in liyf contemplatif” (196-197), which indicates a preferment still for the contemplative life. This preferment suggests that his book is not intended for a general readership, but for one that is either in, or considering, a cloistered life of one sort or another.

The fact that study is only mentioned as a component of the lowest level of contemplation, however, indicates that Hilton has lower expectations for his audience’s ability to read Latin and therefore downplays the importance of this knowledge. He does quote the Bible and Church Fathers, but he reserves the Latin original for the Biblical passages, while he is freer with the words of Augustine and Gregory – a method that stands even in Thomas Fishlake’s Latin translation

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<sup>153</sup> “Neverthelees this partie hath two degrees. The lowere degré of this feelynge, men whiche aren actif may have bi grace whanne thei be visited of oure Lord, as myghtili and as ferventli as thei that gyven hem hooli to contemplatiff liyf and han this gift. But it lasteth not so longe. Also this feelynge in his fervour cometh not alwey whanne a man wolde, ne it lasteth not wel longe. It cometh and gooth as he wole that gyveth it. And therfore whoso hath it, meke hymself and thanke God, and kepe it prevey, but yif it be to his confessour, and holde it as longe as he may with discrecion. And whanne hit withdraweth, drede not to mykil, but stond in feith and in meke hope, with pacient abidyng til it come agen. This is a litil tastynge of the swetenesse in the love of God, of the whiche David seith thus in the sautier: *Gustate et videte quam suavis est dominus* (Psalms 33:9). Tasteth and seeth the swetenesse of oure Lord” (116-126). I quote the entire passage here because when M.N.’s describes how the *Mirror* may be useful to his readers, he uses many of these same images and explanations for how the contemplative life may come and go. He specifically uses “*Gustate et videte*” as I argue in Chapter 4.

of the *Scale*.<sup>154</sup> The importance of the presence of the Latin Biblical passages may stand as a testament to the concerns of translating the Bible at the end of the fourteenth century.

Clark and Dorward speculate on the passage of time and the change of audience between the two books. “What is significant is the shift of emphasis between the two books; *Scale 1* envisages the contemplative life as the preserve, in principle, of those vowed to the contemplative religious state, while *Scale 2* sees ‘contemplation’ or (as it is there called) ‘reforming in feeling’ as something to which every Christian should aspire, whatever his or her state in life. This is part of a shift in the understanding of what actually constitutes ‘contemplation.’”<sup>155</sup>

J. P. H. Clark points out that Hilton drew his ideas of the active and contemplative lives from traditional Church teachings, but that he expanded the notion to discuss how the active life could be used as the foundation for the contemplative life and how it could be available to anyone regardless of station. Clark notes, while discussing Chapter 61 of *Scale 1*,

It may be, [Hilton] says, that some man or woman living in the world – knight or squire, merchant or ploughman – may attain a higher reward in Heaven than some priest or friar, monk or canon or anchorite, because he had more charity of the gift of God. [...] This latter point is not entirely a revolutionary idea; it is at any rate in accord with the principles acknowledged by St Thomas – yet Hilton gives the older teaching a fresh

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<sup>154</sup> “Where Hilton is citing ecclesiastical writers, as distinct from the Bible, Fishlake makes no effort to seek out the Latin originals of Hilton’s quotations” (Clark and Dorward 57).

<sup>155</sup> Clark and Dorward 19-20.

touch at the decisive point. Whereas St Thomas's phrasing suggests that the works of the active life are a concession and a sacrifice made on the part of contemplatives — recalling the note of renunciation which emerges now and again in Gregory [the Great] as he remembers how he left the cloister to accept the pastoral charge of the Papacy — Hilton assumes that active life in the world has dignity and a value in its own right.<sup>156</sup>

Hilton wrote about the importance of the active life and applied it to help his readers achieve the third level of perfection by combining the use of reason with that of affection – an echo of Rolle's "eye of the heart" discussed in the previous chapter – to create a higher understanding achieved through both forms of life. Clark argues that, though Hilton's own interests tend toward the "eremitical life and the Carthusian life, he found his home in the community of Augustinian Canons, who stood for a similarly 'mixed' ideal of religious life."<sup>157</sup>

In his treatise *Mixed Life*, Hilton discusses the problem of those who cannot give up the life they have in the world in order to devote themselves to prayer and meditation. Since this text is addressed to a feudal lord, one whose responsibilities Hilton describes as being important enough not to abandon for a life of contemplation, Hilton describes a third kind of life that he does not mention in the *Scale*: the mixed life.<sup>158</sup> He advises this lord, who apparently has written to Hilton to ask his advice about embracing the contemplative life, that though he is happy that God has interested him in the life of contemplation, it is

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<sup>156</sup> J. P. H. Clark, "Action and Contemplation in Walter Hilton," *The Downside Review* 97 (1979), 265.

<sup>157</sup> Clark, "Action," 265.

<sup>158</sup> *Mixed Life* 10 (note 101).

not good for him to simply abandon his lands, his children, his servants and so forth “and gif þou do soo, þou kepest not þe ordre of charite.”<sup>159</sup> Hilton uses the warning from the *Song of Songs* about the ordering of charity (*Song of Songs* 2:4) and translates it as: “oure lord, geuyng to me charite, sette it in ordre and in rule, þat it schulde not be lost þorough myn vndiscrecioun” and advises that this gift should be used in a manner that suits his current life.<sup>160</sup> But he then tells the lord that there is a third option and that he should seek to order his life according to the mixed life.

Hilton offers a model of this third life in the example of holy men of the Church, “prelates and *other* curates whiche haue cure and souereynthe ouer *othere* men for to [kepe] and for to rule hem.”<sup>161</sup> He explains that these men have responsibilities to the people they govern that keeps them in the active life. He then carries these into the secular world specifically referring to men who have “lordschipe ouere *othere* men for to gouerne and sustene hem, as a fadir hath ouer his children, a maister ouer his seruauntes, and a lord ouere his tenants.”<sup>162</sup> Finally he offers the model of Jesus Christ, explaining that He

“took upon him self þe persone of sich manere men, boþe of prelates of hooli chirche and opere sich as aren disposid as I haue seid, and (g)aue hem ensample bi his owen worchyng þat þei schulden vsen þis medeled

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<sup>159</sup> *Mixed Life* 9, ll. 95-96.

<sup>160</sup> *Mixed Life* 8, ll. 83-87.

<sup>161</sup> *Mixed Life* 14, ll. 145-146.

<sup>162</sup> *Mixed Life* 15, ll. 156-158.

liyf as he dide.”<sup>163</sup>

Gregory the Great and Pseudo-Dionysius, among many others, used the image of the two sisters, Mary and Martha, from Luke 10 as an image of the two forms of religious life, the active and the contemplative.<sup>164</sup> While most authors, including Marguerite Porete, place the importance on Mary and the life of contemplation, the *Scale* counteracts this by writing of the importance of both of these women.<sup>165</sup> Martha, for Hilton, represents the responsibilities of governing and making sure that the people in one’s care do what is right, care for goods and worldly matters, and fulfill deeds of mercy for other Christians. Mary represents the chance to sit “at þe f[ee]t of oure lord bi mekenesse in praieris and in hooli þoughtis and in contemplacioun of him.” Hilton then assures his reader, “And so schalt þou goon from þe toon to þe toþir medfulli, and fulfille hem boþe, and

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<sup>163</sup> *Mixed Life* 17, ll.178-181.

<sup>164</sup> Mary and Martha also appear in the Gospel of John (11:1 – 12:11), but their role as a symbol of the dichotomy between the two lives seems to come from Luke (10:38-42), a much simpler story in which Martha prepares supper while Mary sits and listens to Christ. John’s version includes the resurrection of their brother Lazurus and Judas’s rebuke of Mary for bathing Christ’s feet in ointment, neither of which fits into the symbolism of the simpler story.

<sup>165</sup> Marguerite Porete uses the image several times in her work. M.N. translates one of those passages, “Þis is Marie of pees, for alwey sche haþ þe pees of pees, for her loued hir apeesip. Perfore is sche Marie. Martha is myche encombred, moost wise is sche not for hir encombringe hir troubleþ. Sche is fer from þe liif of pees, for witeþ it forsoþe, þat þei whiche encombrementis troublen ben ful fer from þis liif þat we haue spoken of” (Doiron 309). Hilton, in his earlier works, showed a preference for the life of the contemplative, reserving the higher life for those not in active service (see lines 196-197 of the *Scale* quoted above).

panne kepist þou weel þe ordre of charite.<sup>166</sup>

Hilton thus expands the life of contemplation to include those who cannot leave their secular lives and claims that Christ himself is the ultimate example of this. This treatise supplements his advice to the anchoress for whom he writes the *Scale* and the young contemplative Adam Horsley, by offering a similar life, yet one that is no less important, to those who cannot commit the time and resources a life of strict contemplation would require. While this seems at odds with his description of the contemplative life as the life that is closest to God, it allows for a broader audience for the contemplative life — not in a manner detrimental to Church life, but rather in conjunction with it, as if to bring back those who might look for a life of devotion on their own.

At the same time, Hilton warns against those who seek an understanding of the Gospels or this life of contemplation without the guidance of the Church. In Chapter 58 of *Scale* 1, Hilton warns against the sin of pride in heretics:

An heretike synneth deedli in pride, for he chesith his reste and his delite in his owen opynyoun and in his owen seiynge, for he weneth it is sooth that opynyoun or seiynge whiche is agens God and Hooli Chirche. And therefore synneth he in pride deedli, for he loveth himsilf and his owen wil, and with so moche that though it be opynli agens ordenaunce of Hooli Chirche, he wole not leve it, but reste thereinne, as in a ful soothfastnesse, and so maketh he it his god. But he bigileth himsilf, for God and Holi Chirche are so onyd and acordid togidere that whoso dooth agen that oon, he dooth agen that othir and so he doth agens bothe. And therfore who that seith he loveth God and kepith his biddynge, and dispiceth Hooli Chirche, and setteth at nought the lawes and the ordenaunce of it maad bi the heed and the sovereyn in governaunce of alle Cristen men, he lieth. He chesith not God, but he cheseth the love of himsilf, whiche is contrarie to the love of God, and so he synneth deedli (ll. 1642-1653).

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<sup>166</sup> *Mixed Life* 10-11, ll. 103-116.

Hilton warns against Wyclif's tenet that everyone should be able to read the words of the Gospels on their own and determine what they mean. By calling the Wycliffite interest in individuals determining their own meaning in the Gospels arrogance and by opening the door of contemplation to members of the Church not in the contemplative life, Hilton seems to be addressing the Lollard heresy directly. The principles in his writings permeate the works of his fellow Yorkshire writers at the end of the fourteenth century and lend an insight into the type of guidance M.N. seeks to provide in his translation of the *Mirror*.

## 2. The *Cloud*-author

Debate continues whether the author of the fourteenth-century treatise, the *Cloud of Unknowing*, could have been Walter Hilton. The timing is right and the messages are similar, but both Phyllis Hodgson and H. L. Gardner make convincing arguments for this, and the other works attributed to this writer, being by another author or authors.<sup>167</sup> The *Cloud* belongs to the last quarter of the fourteenth century, almost without doubt, and seems to have the Yorkshire hand. James Walsh outlines the discussion about to which order the author belongs and what initiate was being addressed, before determining them to both be

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<sup>167</sup> In the face of Hodgson's article, "Walter Hilton and the 'Cloud of Unknowing': A Problem of Authorship Reconsidered" (*The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 50, No. 4, 1955) and the older Gardner piece "Hilton and the Authorship of the Cloud of Unknowing" (*The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 34, 1933), James Walsh seems fairly noncommittal in his 1981 translation saying only that most students do not accept Walter Hilton as the author. See James Walsh, S. J. (ed.), *The Cloud of Unknowing*, (New York, Paulist Press, 1981), 3.

Carthusians.<sup>168</sup> Whatever his affiliations, the *Cloud*-author is more important for the way his work appealed to a wider audience and the similarities to the other Yorkshire writers in his response to ideas about contemplation and the reading of the Bible.

Seven works are attributed to the *Cloud*-author: four works of spiritual guidance (the *Cloud*, the *Book of Privy Counsel*, *An Epistle of Prayer*, and *An Epistle of the Discretion of Stirrings*) and three are translations (*Deonise Hid Divinite*, a translation of the Pseudo-Dionysian *Mystical Theology*; a translation of Richard of St. Victor's *Benjamin Minor*; and *A Treatise on the Discretion of Spirits*, a translation of two of Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons on the *Song of Songs*). These works exist in many manuscripts and, like the other works of the Yorkshire writers discussed in this chapter, appealed to Carthusian monks, such as Richard Methley and James Grenehalgh, into the sixteenth century.<sup>169</sup>

Like Hilton, the *Cloud*-author wrote treatises and letters designed to respond

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<sup>168</sup> Walsh believes that the only two possibilities were Cistercian or Carthusian (Walsh, *Cloud*, 3-5), but John Hughes believes that it is likely he was a Dominican (Hughes 187). In both cases, the evidence seems slight, beyond the fact that Richard Methley or the scribe believed the *Cloud*-author to be a Carthusian, but he also believed that Marguerite Porete's *Mirror* was written by Ruusbroec, whom he also thought was a Carthusian. See John Clark, *Speculum Animarum Simplicium: A Glossed Latin Version of The Mirror of Simple Souls*, Vol. 1, (Salzburg: Institut Für Anglistik and Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 2010), 1 n 2.

<sup>169</sup> Richard Methley, who translated M.N.'s *Mirror* into Latin, did the same for the *Cloud of Unknowing*, and both travel together in MS Pembroke College, Cambridge, 221, which was created at Sheen by William Darker (d. 1512) and contains annotations by James Grenehalgh. Several copies were owned by merchants by the seventeenth century, which indicates at least some post-Reformation lay interest in the works. (Walsh, *Cloud*, 15 and 99.)



to a specific student. Again, speculation exists whether the specific student was a literary convention, but the author explained in his letters that while they are for a specific person, others might benefit from the discussion as well. Whether the addressee is Carthusian, Cistercian, or Dominican, the fact that the *Cloud*-author translates the Latin references or leaves out the original Latin altogether suggests that the student had not yet reached Latin proficiency.

The *Cloud*-author also translated the sixth-century pseudo-Dionysian *De Mystica Theologia* into English, which he entitled *Deonise hid Divinite*, a work that is a major source for Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer* and may demonstrate a wider interest in Dionysian works at the time of this translation and perhaps a motivation for M.N. Marguerite Porete's work is heavily influenced by the so-called Areopagite and may have found an audience alongside the works of the *Cloud*-author for this reason.<sup>170</sup>

The *Cloud*-author is also responsible for translating a treatise by Richard of St. Victor, which he calls *A Treatise of the Study of Wisdom that Men Call*

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<sup>170</sup> Dionysius the Areopagite was a disciple of Christ mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (17:34); there are five Greek works attributed to him: *The Divine Names*, *The Mystical Theology*, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, and a series of letters. According to Paul Rorem's preface to the translation of these works, the texts are from the fifth or sixth century; the actual author is unknown and so most scholars attribute the work to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem [trans.], *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, [New York: Paulist Press, 1987], 1). There are only two manuscripts of *Deonise Hid Divinite* (British Library MS Harleian 674; and Cambridge University Library MS Kk. vi. 26) and both contain all seven treatises ascribed to the *Cloud*-author. See Phyllis Hodgson (ed.), *Deonise Hid Divinite and Other Treatises on Contemplative Prayer Related to The Cloud of Unknowing*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), ix.

*Benjamin*, or, as it is usually known, *Benjamin Minor*.<sup>171</sup> This book focuses on an image of the two lives: the wives of Jacob, which Gregory and other Church Fathers used to demonstrate the importance of the two roles. Leah, the first wife, is not beautiful, but she is fruitful and has many children. She represents the active life in the Church and affection. Rachel, the second wife, who is beautiful but dies in conceiving her second child, Benjamin, represents the contemplative life and reason.<sup>172</sup> This translation does not follow the original as closely as his work on the *Deonise*, but its concentration on this explanation of the two lives and the importance of each fits into the discussion that I argue informs each of the Yorkshire writers' works.

In chapter XVII of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, the author takes this discussion up directly with another image of the two lives that has already been discussed in relation to Hilton's work, that of Mary and Martha. In chapter XVIII, the *Cloud*-author directly addresses the complaint that contemplatives do nothing by saying,

“[...] and they begin to tell him stories, true as well as fictitious, of men and women who have fallen away after giving themselves to the contemplative life; but they never say anything about those who

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<sup>171</sup> This is another work that served as a source for Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer*.

<sup>172</sup> Richard of St. Victor uses each member of Jacob's family to represent other aspects of life as well. Rachel and Leah are assisted by two maidens: Zelfa, who assists Leah and represents sensuality, and Bala who assists Rachel and represents imagination. The two maidens each conceive two children as well and each of the children represents certain features of the holy life as well. By creating this lineage from Jacob, Richard of St. Victor was creating a structure for a holy life that could be easily studied and memorized, a goal to which the *Cloud*-author contributes by making a chart of the wives and children and what each represents (Hodgson, *Deonise*, 15).

persevere.”<sup>173</sup>

The *Cloud*-author offers only an agreement that there are those who fall away from time to time, and promises that if there is time later he will discuss why they might fall away. Instead he moves on by excusing Martha’s ignorance (and by extension, those who ignorantly believe that contemplatives do nothing), but the fifteenth-century Carthusian Richard Methley adds a note condemning those who should understand the importance of the contemplative life and continue to persecute it.<sup>174</sup>

We get some insight into the *Cloud*-author’s translation methods from the prologue to *Deonise Hid Divinite*, when he discusses the fact that he’s not only using the “nakid lettre of þe text,” but also the Latin translation created by John Sarracenus, a twelfth-century writer, and the commentaries and writings of Thomas Gallus (d.1246).<sup>175</sup> The idea of translating this book using commentaries and scholarship rather than the simple text fits in with the Yorkshire writers’ desire to provide practical guidance for these texts of serious theology. By incorporating directions and guidance directly into their translations, the

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<sup>173</sup> Walsh, *Cloud*, 159.

<sup>174</sup> Richard Methley’s gloss, in Latin, is translated, “Martha and many others are to be considered in good faith. But those who have knowledge either full or in part, or according to our text who should have it and refuse to acquire it when they can, are culpable in so far as they blame contemplatives maliciously” (Walsh, *Cloud*, 160).

<sup>175</sup> The *Cloud*-author identifies Gallus as the “Abbot of Seinte Victore,” but he was actually a Canon Regular at St. Victor’s in Paris and served as Abbot of Vercelli, an abbey which had several connections with the Church of Chesterton at Cambridge (Hodgson, *Cloud*, 119; 188).

Yorkshire writers could provide more difficult works like those of Richard of St. Victor and Pseudo-Dionysius to widening audience without the fear of misinterpretation. Pseudo-Dionysius's works had a profound influence on many of the Doctors of the Church — for example, Hodgson cites at least seventeen hundred references to his work in the works of Thomas Aquinas. With the opening of such works — *Deonise Hid Divinite*, especially because it dealt with such a difficult concept as apophatic mysticism — to a larger audience by translation into English, it is not surprising that works like Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer*, another book influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius's works, might have been of interest to authors and readers in the *Cloud*-author's circle.<sup>176</sup>

Aside from translation of these important works, the *Cloud*-author bears another resemblance to Hilton in the work he does to provide counsel to others. In his *Book of Privy Counsel*, the *Cloud*-author exhorts his student — a person he specifically identifies as someone for whom he would like to serve as a spiritual guide — to simplify his meditation process and to concentrate simply on being. He jokes in Chapter 2 that even animals know they exist and that understanding

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<sup>176</sup> Apophaticism, or negative theology, is the foundation for both Marguerite Porete's "annihilation of the soul" and the *Cloud*-author's "unknowing." In the opening of *The Mystical Theology*, Pseudo-Dionysius exhorts his friend, Timothy, "my advice to you as you look for a sight of the mysterious things, is to leave behind you everything perceived and understood, everything perceptible and understandable, all that is not and all that is, and, with your understanding laid aside, to strive upward as much as you can toward union with him who is beyond all being and knowledge. By an undivided and absolute abandonment of yourself and everything, shedding all and freed from all, you will be uplifted to the ray of the divine shadow which is above everything that is" (Luibheid 135). Apophaticism is a major theological motif employed by both Marguerite Porete and the *Cloud*-author.

that one exists is the simplest form of thought, but in concentrating on one's own existence, one might be able to reflect the existence of God.<sup>177</sup> While this is a different tack from the *Mirouer*, in which Marguerite Porete states that one must surrender one's own will and existence to God, the *Cloud*-author is trying to eliminate the same need for worldly interests or goods that Porete, M.N., and Walter Hilton are trying to eliminate. The *Cloud*-author's goal, like Richard Rolle's, is to demonstrate that you do not have to be an educated man or to have lots of books to complete this task. The student needs only to be able to quiet his mind enough to concentrate on existence. He asks that the student keep silent, or, if he has to pray, stick to something easy that does not require much thought. As Marguerite Porete says in the *Mirouer* in an opening prayer excluded from M.N.'s translation, the *Cloud*-author specifically warns that the well educated theologian might "ben so bleendid in here coryous kunnyng of clergie & of kynde þat þe trewe conceite of þis *light* werk, þorow þe whiche þe boistousest [lewyd] mans soule or wommans in þis liif is verily in louely meekness onyd to God in parfite charite, may no more, ne yet so moche, be conceyuid of hem in sobfastnes[...]"<sup>178</sup>

Later, in the *Book of Privy Counsel*, the *Cloud*-author again addresses the issue of meditating on one's being and explains that this earlier direction was just

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<sup>177</sup> "For I holde him to lewyd & to boistous þat kan not þenk & fele þat himself is, not what himself is bot þat hymself is. For þis is pleyynli proprid to þe lewdist kow or to þe moste vnresonable beest (yif it might be seide, as it may not, þat one were lewder or more vnresonable þen anoþer) for to fele þe owne propre beyng" (Hodgson, *Cloud*, 76).

<sup>178</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 76 (ll. 28-32).

a starting point and that the real point was to have the student “for(g)ete þe felyng of þe beyng of þiself as for þe felyng of þe beyng of God.”<sup>179</sup> In this statement the *Cloud*-author reveals two important things about his work. The first is that his plan of study is a progressive one that is meant to be started slowly and with low expectations, but that allows for steady growth to the headier contemplation of God. “[T]o late þee climbe þerto by degree, I bad þee first gnawe on þe nakid blinde felyng of þin owne being, vnto þe tyme þat þou mightest be maad able to þe highe felynge of God bi goostly contynowaunce of þis priue werk,” he tells his student.<sup>180</sup> The image of “gnawing” on a difficult practice is one that is shared by both Hilton and M.N., both seeming to hearken back to Guigo’s *Scala Claustralium*.<sup>181</sup> The author also reveals that, though this book is meant specifically for one person as he advises in the prologue, he also includes “alleliche vnto þee þat þis writyng scholen ouþer rede or here.”<sup>182</sup> In Hilton’s work, the audience is often a question mark. Though he wrote the *Scale of Perfection* for a specific anchoress, there are many references to the expectations of a wider audience that appears in later chapters.<sup>183</sup> The *Cloud*-author seems to have no

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<sup>179</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 88 (ll. 41-42).

<sup>180</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 89 (ll. 3-7).

<sup>181</sup> See note 44 for a description of this book. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the image of gnawing bark to get to the meat of a nut, an image shared by *Scale of Perfection* and M.N.’s glosses in the *Mirror*.

<sup>182</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 88 (ll. 18-19).

<sup>183</sup> For example in Chapter 92 of *Scale* 1: “and also my purpos is for to stire thee

illusion that his student will keep the work private, going so far as to suggest that the book will be read aloud to an audience as was often the case with illiterate students.

In discussing the distinctions between the active and contemplative lives, the *Cloud*-author, like Hilton, goes beyond the clerical world, suggesting that people from all walks of life may participate in the life of contemplation. In the *Book of Privy Counsel*, he borrows from Aquinas's discussion of the two lives, in which Aquinas does not completely bar the notion that secular people might participate in the contemplative life, but takes the logic much further than Aquinas did:

For siþ in þe first biginnyng of Holy Chirche in þe tyme of persecucion, dyuerse soules & many weren so merueylously touched in sodeynthe of grace þat sodenly, wiþoutyn menes of oþer werkes coming before, þei kaste here instruments, men of craftes, of here hondes, children here tables in þe scole, & ronnen wiþoutyn ransakyng of reson to þe martirdom wiþ seintes: whi schul men not trowe now, in tyme of pees, þat God may, kan & wile & doþ -- ye! touche diuerse soules as sodenly wiþ þe grace of contemplacion?<sup>184</sup>

The *Cloud*-author recognizes the practicality of writing about meditation and contemplation, or at least trying to describe the feelings that one has when connecting with God. In the *Book of Privy Counsel*, he warns his student that the enthusiasm and joy he feels in contemplation will be hard to discuss even with

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or any othir man or woman that hath take the staat of contemplatif liyf for to traveile more bisili and more mekeli in that maner of lif bi sicke simple wordes as God hath gyven me grace for to seie" (ll. 2615-2618).

<sup>184</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 85 (ll. 30-37). See note 82 above for Aquinas's thoughts on the laity being able to participate in contemplation without further education.

another person who has achieved such high levels of contemplation. He warns the student: “A þousand mile woldest þou renne to comoun moubly wiþ one þat þou wist þat verrelly felt it; & yit, whan þou comest þere, kanst þou nought sey, speke whoso speke wil, fo þee list not speke bot of it.”<sup>185</sup>

This thought is mirrored in one of the passages that M.N. feels he must clarify in Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror*. In discussing the union with God and how one might wish to teach another about it, she warns that no one, “ne alle þo of paradise oon oonli poynt atteyne ne vndirstande, for al þe knowinge þat þei haue of him.” She carries the point further, and makes it more harsh than the *Cloud*-author by saying,

Lord, þei mysseien wel of you, þat alwei speken of you, and neuere seien nobing of youre goodnesse[...] þanne is þis greet vilanye, þat men don me, to wite, þat men schal seie me sumping of þe goodnesse of you. But þei ben deceyued þat leuen it, for I am in certeyn, þat men may not seie. And if God wole I schal no more be deceyued. I wole no more heere gabbe of youre diuine goodnesse.<sup>186</sup>

M.N. mitigates the accusation of lying (gabbynge) and slander (misseien) by writing that the Soul overstates her passion, that her love causes her to hear the words of priests and scholars as lies “for as myche as þei may not areche to a poynt of þe fulhede of soþfastnesse.”<sup>187</sup> Clearly M.N. was concerned about the accusation of lying on the part of the priesthood or spiritual teachers, but there is

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<sup>185</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 95 (ll. 26-28).

<sup>186</sup> Doiron 264.

<sup>187</sup> Doiron 264.



also the recognition that those who have felt this union with God cannot explain it, so they should not try too hard, just as the *Cloud*-author explained above. The *Cloud*-author is able to make the point about the ineffability of God, while refraining from accusing the clergy of being liars.

The *Cloud*-author follows this with another point that mirrors M.N. by warning that the connection with God is not a permanent one and the student must also deal with the anxiety and hurt that comes with separation after such a deep connection. The *Cloud*-author writes an analogy about a boat lost at sea, cut off from grace and lost to God:

He schal loke up, paraenture *right* sone, & efte touche þee wiþ a more feruent stering of þat same grace þan euer þou feltest any before. Þen arte þou al hole & all good inowgh, as þee þenkeþ, last while it laste may. For sodenly, er euer þou wite, alle is away, & thou leuyst bareyn in þe bote, blowyn wiþ blundryng, now heder now þeder, þou wost neuir where ne wheder. Yit be not abascht, for he schal come [...] <sup>188</sup>

In his first gloss, M.N. responds to an odd passage in which Marguerite Porete seems to number herself among “lordis fre of al, but loue of him for us” by explaining that

whiles we ben in þis world we may not be fre of al. þis is to seie, to be departid contynuelli from alle spottes of synne. But whanne a soule is drawe into hirsilf from al outward þing, so þat loue werkiþ in þe soule – bi whiche the soule is for a tyme departid fro al synne and is vnyed to God bi vnyoun – þanne is þe soule fre. As for þat tyme of vnyoun, ful litel tyme it is. And whanne sche comeþ doun þerfro, þanne is sche þralle fallynge or fadinge. To þis acordeþ hooli writ, where þat it seiþ: Septies in die cadit iustus. But þis fallinge of þe *rightwise* is more merit þan synne, because of þe goode wille þat stondiþ vnbroken, and is vnyed to God.” <sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 96.

<sup>189</sup> Doiron 251.

Again, both authors write against the notion that one can be in constant connection with God and therefore always be doing his will, a charge against deification that is leveled against the beguines by the Council of Vienne, who were accused of claiming that all that they do is sanctioned by God, because it is His will with which they are constantly enacting.<sup>190</sup>

In the *Epistle of Discretion*, the *Cloud*-author also makes clear the importance of listening for grace rather than following any particular rule. When he is asked by his student when he should eat or fast, when he should speak or remain silent, and when he should be solitary or in the company of others, he responds by telling his student to stop looking at these things as a dichotomy and instead look to where God is and do as He wills, which seems to follow the *Mirror* about simply doing the will of God and not being concerned about the requirements of the Mass or the rules of the Church.<sup>191</sup> He advises against doing

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<sup>190</sup> In the papal bull *Ad nostrum*, the Council of Vienne (1317), headed by Clement V accused “an abominable sect of malignant men known as beghards and faithless women known as beguines” of eight errors. The first of these is “that man can attain such a degree of perfection in his earthly life that he is incapable of sin” (Lerner, *Heresy*, 82). When dealing with the notion of contemplation and achieving union with God, those discussing mysticism, like M.N. and the *Cloud*-author, were careful to keep the idea of a permanent state of union with God out of the question.

<sup>191</sup> “Dis soule ne desireþ dispite ne pouert ne tribulacion ne diseese ne masses ne sermons ne fastyng ne orisons, and sche giueþ to nature al þat he askiþ wiþoute grucchyng of conscience” (Doiron 258). M.N. places one of his longest glosses here explaining that the soul can only ignore these things while she is united with God who looks after her and so she can forego the rituals of the Church during that time.

what others do, or judging what others do, and makes it clear that each path is determined between the contemplative and God. He warns against using the bodily senses to make a judgment as to what one must do to achieve the life of perfection, and he warns against making judgments against what others do in their time of contemplation.<sup>192</sup> It is important to see how difficult it was at the end of the fourteenth century for the contemplative afraid of error: simply misunderstanding the procedures could mean risking damnation for inadvertent heresy. The *Cloud*-author is practical in dealing with matters of mysticism and contemplation – a trait that seems common to the authors discussed in this chapter.

### 3. The *Chastising*-author

The first two authors discussed in this chapter – Walter Hilton and the *Cloud*-author – demonstrated the three trends discussed in Chapter 2 in their various works. Whether they were translating works of Continental contemplation (such as the *Prickying of Love* and *Deonise Hid Divinite*) or creating new spiritual guides (such as the *Scale of Perfection* and the *Cloud of Unknowing*), each warned against the pride that comes with trying to understand the depths of God's mysteries without the guidance of a Church-trained teacher. Each of these works

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<sup>192</sup> I quote just the beginning of the closing paragraph of the letter, as to reproduce it all here would not serve the point. “And þerfore speke whan þee list & leue whan þee list; ete whan þee list and fast whan þee list; be in companie whan þee list & be by þiself whan þee list; so þat God and grace be þi leder. Late fast who fast wil, and be only who wil, and lat holde silence who hold wil; bot holde þee bi God, þat no man begileþ” (Hodgson, *Cloud*, 118).

highlights a particular aspect of translation, guidance for the laity, and warnings against the infiltration of heresy. On the other hand, the *Chastising of God's Children*, a work most likely created in the last two decades of the fourteenth century, combines these trends into one text.<sup>193</sup> Employing a whole host of Continental works for the creation of his book, the *Chastising*-author wrote for an unnamed female student in an attempt to guide her through the several dangers of living the contemplative life without the direct supervision of those members of the clergy trained in the contemplative life. The *Chastising* appears in fourteen manuscripts dating as far back as the first decade of the fifteenth century, but none of them appears to be a signature copy.<sup>194</sup> The reason I include it in this study of the Yorkshire textual community is that it also shares a manuscript with M.N.'s translation of the *Mirror* (MS Bodleian 505) and seems to stand as a direct warning for those who would read the text of the *Mirror*.

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<sup>193</sup> Annie Sutherland outlines the dating controversy, starting with Bazire and Colledge's establishment of the *terminus a quo* at 1382 and *terminus ante quem* at 1408 for the *Chastising* at the beginning of her essay. She further narrows the dates of the writing of the *Chastising* to somewhere between 1391 and 1401. See Annie Sutherland, "The *Chastising of God's Children*: A Neglected Text," *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale Essays in Honor of Anne Hudson*, ed. by Helen Barr and Ann M. Hutchison, (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2005), 354-359. While narrowing the date of a work like the *Chastising* is difficult, during this period it is important because it changes the emphasis for which the book was written, which makes the dating issues of the *Chastising* as confounding as those of M.N.'s translation of the *Mirror*. Also see Joyce Bazire and Eric Colledge (eds.), *The Chastising of God's Children and the Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 34-37 (hereafter abbreviated as *Chastising*).

<sup>194</sup> *Chastising* 11. For a full description of each of the manuscripts see *Chastising* 1-10.

The *Chastising* is made up of several earlier English and Continental texts with many of its allusions and warnings coming from a range of sources: Henry Suso's *Horologium Sapientiae*, the *Ancrene Riwe*, Jan van Ruusbroec's *Spiritual Espousals*, Isadore's *Sentences*, Gregory's *Moralia*, John Cassian's *Collatio*, commentaries attributed to Bonaventure and Augustine, Alphonse of Pech's *Epistola solitarii*, James of Milan's *Stimulus Amoris*, Aelred of Rievaulx's *Speculum Charitatis*, Bernard of Clairvoux's sermons on the *Song of Songs*, Augustine's *De vera religione*, and St. Anselm's *Meditatio ad concitandum timorem*.<sup>195</sup>

Annie Sutherland remarks on the appearance of quotation in the *Chastising*, demonstrating an inconsistency with respect to how Latin is used as opposed to the vernacular. She notes that as the work continues, the author becomes less concerned with providing accurate or full translations of the Latin or with providing reference points so that the citation could be easily located by students of the text, which seems to render them more difficult to understand or locate. Sutherland suggests several possibilities for this, all of which point to the difficulty writers at the end of the fourteenth century faced when dealing with translation and orthodoxy:

[...] as the treatise progresses, so its biblical voice becomes increasingly fraught in its attempts to negotiate an orthodox alliance between the Vulgate and the vernacular. In no other text do we see more clearly the curiously ambiguous positions into which both Church and laity, literate and illiterate, were forced by virtue of the growing translation controversy. It was apparently acceptable for the laity and the illiterate to encounter the

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<sup>195</sup> *Chastising* 45-46.

Scriptures in the vernacular when this encounter could be exegetically supervised. Yet as soon as a solitary encounter became possible, the Bible became a Latin entity once more.<sup>196</sup>

This work then embodies the tension of the last two decades of the fourteenth century, and demonstrates the importance of the Yorkshire circle's attempts to regain control over the works being translated by the Wycliffite factions, including the Bible itself. The fact that the author of the *Chastising* seems mostly concerned with translations of the Psalms may have a direct reflection on the Wycliffite interest in the Rolle translation of the *Psalter*. Several scholars point to the specific warnings contained in the *Chastising* to both the feelings of “enthusiasm” – the physical manifestations Rolle talks about: *calor*, *dulcor*, and *canor* – that seems to be the central concern of for spiritual guides when navigating Rolle's texts, and the warnings against the Heresy of the Free Spirit, a heresy to which the *Mirror* is often linked, making the *Chastising* a perfect companion for books of somewhat dubious nature. By providing the “exegetical supervision” discussed by Sutherland — something we will see again in the discussion of Nicholas Love's translation of the *Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* and in M.N.'s glosses — the *Chastising* itself could be used as a control for works that were already available to a Latin-illiterate audience and ensure that the more “dangerous” works could be read in a more orthodox light.

But the mixture of all of these works shows a manipulative editor who seems to be bent on reining in some more controversial material. For example, Colledge and Bazire point to the fact that the *Chastising*-author's use of *Spiritual*

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<sup>196</sup> Sutherland 373.

*Espousals* is confined largely to the second part of Ruusbrouec's book, which is largely concerned with the importance of the contemplative life. The *Espousals* is built on the premise that the active life and the contemplative work together to bring a participant to union with God. Each part of Ruusbroec's book concentrates on the various natures of these lives, but the *Chastising* focuses on the notions of the life of contemplation, heavily editing any notion of the union with God in this life. Bazire and Colledge note:

The two authors' intentions in their treatises are entirely different. Ruysbroek is concerned with the dangers of heresy because it represents to him deviations from the way that leads to the highest goal, the mystical union of the soul with God: The *Chastising* uses his expositions of these dangers because its author believes that the pursuit of mystical union by his spiritual charges [simple-minded nuns] will represent a danger in itself.<sup>197</sup>

Chapters 19 and 20 of the *Chastising* is a reconstruction of Alphonse of Pecha's *Epistola solitarii ad reges*, which was written to defend Bridget of Sweden's "status as visionary and prophet by outlining how she conforms to the principles of *discretio spirituum*, the doctrine which establishes the criteria for distinguishing true visions and visionaries from those inspired by the devil."<sup>198</sup> Bazire and Colledge demonstrate that the *Chastising*-author used Alphonse of Pecha's letter, but that it has "been so carefully manipulated that [it is] now not an apologia for genuine visionaries, but a warning to the unwary of how easily they

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<sup>197</sup> *Chastising* 48.

<sup>198</sup> Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, (York: York Medieval Press, 1999), 159.

may be deceived by the devil.”<sup>199</sup> In this manner, the author of the *Chastising* is able to guide his student away from the “dangerous” desire for visions, just as Hilton and the *Cloud*-author were able to guide their students away from Rolle’s “enthusiasm.”<sup>200</sup>

Alphonse of Pecha’s *Epistola solitarii ad reges* and Bridget of Sweden’s *Revelations* were both translated into English and six Latin manuscripts have been found in England. A fragment of the translation of the *Revelations* can be found in British Library, MS Additional 37790 along with one of the three copies of M.N.’s *Mirror*, so it would seem that there is a similar audience for these works. The appearance of the *Chastising* with the *Mirror* in Bodleian MS 505 also indicates the similar interest. The English translation of the *Epistola solitarii* is found in only one manuscript: London, British Library, MS Cotton Julius Fii.

The key section of the *Epistola* used by the author of the *Chastising* is the one in which Alphonse of Pecha lists the seven tokens by which one might know whether a vision was sent by God or the devil. In both the translation in MS Cotton Julius Fii and the *Chastising*, the description of the seven tokens is curtailed from the Latin description, removing some of the passages that deal with the exceptional character of the visionary. Notably, in the description of the fifth token in the Latin version of the *Epistola*, Voaden states:

that the purpose of prophecy is to lead the people in the ways of God; he cites Aquinas and Proverbs XXIX: “Cum defecerit propheta, dissipabitur populus.” When, as a result of such visions, the people are turned from

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<sup>199</sup> *Chastising* 48.

<sup>200</sup> See note 59 above.



vice, sin and hatred to humility, peace and a religious life, then it is a sign that the revelation was from God, since it is impossible that good should proceed from the devil. The *Liber celestis* [the English title of Bridget's *Revelations*] demonstrates that Bridget's visions, which were of God, had a salutary effect on the lives of many people, in many places.<sup>201</sup>

The fact that both English translators leave out the importance of prophecy as a form of leadership from the fifth token may be the result of a writer concerned with women using Bridget of Sweden as a role model. Perhaps, the *Chastising*-author, with all of his warnings about humility and remaining subservient to male teachers, wanted to quell his pupil's desire for visions for any purpose beyond contemplation.

The other notable change that the *Chastising*-author makes is his constant reminder of how visions are an inward sign, not a physical manifestation. In listing the first token, which is simply the meekness of the visionary and her submission to the clergy, the *Chastising*-author adds that the meekness is both "inward and outward."<sup>202</sup> In describing the second token, the translator whose work appears in the Cotton manuscript refers to "godly cherite," and the *Chastising*-author calls it "inward charite."<sup>203</sup> In describing the third token, both translators refer to bodily and spiritual visions, but the *Chastising*-author emphasizes the point by reiterating that he is referring to "inward knowynge and

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<sup>201</sup> Voaden, *God's Words*, 179 note 131.

<sup>202</sup> *Chastising* 177.

<sup>203</sup> Voaden, *God's Words*, 177; *Chastising* 178.

goostli *light* of trewe shewyng.”<sup>204</sup> While this may be a small matter and one of interpretation of the Latin, the emphasis on the inward and outward lives and how they are connected was a major theme of the Yorkshire circle as already shown in the writings of the Hilton and the *Cloud*-author and the importance of the contemplative life not manifesting in the physical way that Rolle discussed.

The *Chastising* may also speak to the debate in modern scholarship about Free Spiritism and whether it reached England. One of the sections of the Ruusbroec’s *Spiritual Espousals* – Chapters 11 and 12 – contains Ruusbroec’s own warnings against Free Spiritism, though neither the original nor the *Chastising*’s adaptation refer to the heresy by name. Robert Lerner dismisses the idea that Free Spiritism had reached England and states that any use of anti-Free Spirit writings in England, such as the passages quoted from Ruusbroec’s *Espousals*, were meant to be used against the Lollards instead.<sup>205</sup> Kerby-Fulton challenges Lerner’s dismissal of the idea that Free Spiritism had reached England by pointing out the addition the *Chastising*-author made to the end of chapter twelve:

His [the author’s] concern in this passage is what affects “goostli lyuers,” including their ‘desire’ for ‘reuelacions.’ This is not a description of Lollardy in any recognizable form, but of Free Spiritism (which he has just finished describing at length via his translation of Ruysbroeck) and of some dangers attached to revelatory theology.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Voaden, *God’s Words*, 177-178; *Chastising* 179.

<sup>205</sup> See Lerner, *Heresy*, 195 note 46.

<sup>206</sup> Kerby-Fulton 264.

In support of this argument, Ruusbroec's original description of Free Spiritism appears in the *Chastising* with few alterations from the original. Ruusbroec's *Spiritual Espousals* contains a description of three perversions of the contemplative life, a description translated closely in Chapters 9, 10, and 11 in the *Chastising*. The first is the group of men who simply fall asleep when they are supposed to be meditating and so promote simple idleness.<sup>207</sup> The second are those who think themselves better than everyone else because of their time of contemplation.<sup>208</sup> The last group, though, are the Free Spirit followers, which are easily identified as those who wait for God to move them as if they were a "deed stok or anoþer instrument, þat lieþ stille ydel til þe werker comeþ and settiþ it awerke; for þei þenke if þei diden any þing wilfulli, bi her owne wirchyng or besynesse, god shuld þane be let of his owne werkyng."<sup>209</sup> The fact that this description appears in the *Chastising*, and bears no resemblance to Lollardy in

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<sup>207</sup> "Whan a man haþ suche a reste bi a false ydelnesse, and whan al oþer excercises þat bringgen in loue is to hym lettyng, þan he dwelliþ and abideþ oonli upon himsilf and in hymself, uttirli void fro al uertuous lyueng. Pis errour is a ful bigynnyng of al gostli errors, bicause of þe pride and presumpcion þat swellþ in his herte" (*Chastising* 133).

<sup>208</sup> "[...] þe loue of kynde is as liche to charite as to þe worchyng outward as two heeris of oon hed; but þe willis and þe menynges bien myche discordyng an ful vnliche, for a goode mans herte is euer upward to god in his entencion, and alwey desireþ þe worship of god, but in naturel loue a mans wil bowiþ to his profite and ease. Whan þe loue of kynde passiþ þus of þe loue of god and charite be contrarious wille and worchyng, þanne a man falliþ into foure perelous synnes: that is to seie, into pride, auarice, glotenye and lecherie" (*Chastising* 136).

<sup>209</sup> *Chastising* 140.

any way, suggests that the author could be expressing a warning against Free Spiritism. Lerner's argument that the author of the *Chastising* was "recast[ing] attacks on false mystics to make them apply to followers of Wyclif," does not seem to hold here.<sup>210</sup> While the first perversion Ruusbroec saw could apply to any aspect of prayer or contemplation; the second is mirrored in the warnings of Hilton in Chapter 58 of *Scale* 1, when he warns about pride in accomplishments being the full reward some men get from contemplation. But the idea of a group of people who wait for God to move them physically for fear of interfering with his will seems to be a rather specific description of Free Spiritism.

Translation and context, then, play a large part in the reception of these works and though we cannot say surely that Free Spiritism had reached the shores of England by the end of the fourteenth century, the *Chastising* indicates there was some concern about this non-Lollard heresy. The Church's issue with deification and with Free Spiritism could be a motivation for the proliferation of the *Chastising* and its pairing with M.N.'s translation of the *Mirror* in MS 505 in that by providing this education in humility and the constant warning about submitting to Church guidance, the contemplation taught by the *Mirror* is brought under control and becomes a less dangerous mode of contemplation.

The author of the *Chastising* places the image of Balaam (Numbers 22:22; 2 Peter 2: 15-16), a false prophet who falls so far from an understanding with God, that his donkey understands more clearly what should be done and tells him so, at the beginning of his treatise. Though the *Chastising*-author presents this image as

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<sup>210</sup> Lerner, *Heresy*, 195 note 46.

a humility trope, he also uses it as a warning to his young student that with knowledge comes the temptation to use that knowledge for personal aggrandizement. Balaam becomes the perfect image of those who would use their knowledge of God to further their own ends. He calls his student to “wakeþ and preieþ þat ye entre nat into temptacion.”<sup>211</sup> Wake, so that she may enjoy the presence of God, and pray, so that she may not be tempted to use her vision of God for ill purposes.

The *Chastising* continues with an explanation of why God might withdraw from those he blesses, and for the next several chapters the author explains why God withdraws and how one might get God to return. It seems that the *Chastising*-author is speaking directly to those who feel that they have been touched by God or who have experienced visions — a matter that is also discussed in Chapter 4 with a description of how to tell when a vision has been sent by God. All of this seems to be specifically aimed at those who would believe they understand the Bible or the writings of the Church Fathers without any religious training, and therefore seems to be aimed at those who would feel that they could circumvent the Church and study the word of God on their own. The author warns against loving the gifts of God more than God himself and being fooled by this into taking the visions for God himself.

Suche maner wirchynges god wrought oft siþes to man and to womman in her first begynnyng whan þei drowen to goostli lyuenge, and whan þei turned hem al hooli to god, þat is to sei whan þei forsaken al worldli comfort and put her hope fulli in god; and yit for al þis, þei ben right

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<sup>211</sup> *Chastising* 96.

tendre, as children þat neden milke and softe mete and swete. For harde metis and soure *thei* mowen nat suffir.<sup>212</sup>

This is an image that recurs in Nicholas Love's *Mirror*, and a sentiment expressed by all of the Yorkshire writers, but here, the author is explaining the preparation one must have to face the heavy temptations that come with deeper knowledge of God and that one must have to face the loneliness of separation from God. The *Chastising*-author's approach is not to say that visions and mystical unions do not happen, nor even that they only happen to people with great learning, but rather that it requires great learning and preparation to deal with the aftermath of such gifts from God.

The evidence that all of this writing against heresy and deceptive visions was making its way across the Channel to England and that it was not only being translated but prepared for less experienced readers points to concerns about issues similar to those of Free Spiritism. England was certainly not isolated from heresy. The danger of taking contemplation too far seems to be a reasonable concern of the Church and may explain why the compiler of Bodleian MS 505 would place a copy of the *Chastising* before the copy of Marguerite Porete's *Mirror*. Again, this work contains the three trends of the Yorkshire writers: the desire to teach contemplation outside the confines of the cloister; the interest in the translation of effective works of contemplation; and the understanding that without prior experience, a student of contemplation could be led to dangerous

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<sup>212</sup> *Chastising* 103-04.

heresies like that of Lollardy, and of Free Spiritism (under whatever guise it came to England).

Most of the manuscript evidence points to a popularity of this text among religious women. Bazire and Colledge list three printed copies of the *Chastising* as belonging to nuns at Syon Abbey and at the Augustinian house in Campsey, Suffolk.<sup>213</sup> And there is some evidence of lay ownership in the wills of two widows by the middle of the fifteenth century, both bequeathing the book to religious women's houses.<sup>214</sup> While this does not prove a lay readership at the end of the fourteenth century, the evidence speaks to an interest in the contemplative life among women at this time. The Church's insistence on close supervision and not outright suppression, might have meant that there was some understanding that the contemplative life had value with the right guidance.

#### 4. Nicholas Love

As with most of the other writers in this survey, we know little about the personal life of Nicholas Love (d.1424) beyond the fact that he began his translation of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* in 1408 and that he served as the first

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<sup>213</sup> "A printed copy formerly in the Harleian library, now untraceable, belonged to two nuns of the Augustinian house at Campsey, Suffolk. Two nuns of the Bridgetine house of Syon owned the printed copy now in Göttingen University Library; two other Syon nuns owned that which is now Sidney Sussex College Bb. 2. 14." (*Chastising* 38).

<sup>214</sup> *Chastising* 38. The editors note that in both cases the widows left the books to houses with poor reputations (the Cistercian nuns at Esholt and the Benedictine nuns of Easebourne Priory in Sussex), perhaps with the hopes of improving their conduct.

prior to the new Charterhouse at Mount Grace in Yorkshire from around 1409 to 1421.<sup>215</sup> What little else we know of him — his influences and goals — come from his book. He knew of the works of Walter Hilton and he praises them in the text.<sup>216</sup> Nicholas Love is important in this survey of Yorkshire writers because of his interest in translation, his desire to combat Lollardy, the style he chose for his glosses, and the readership he desired for his book.

Love provides a direct connection to the Carthusian order and its interests in translating works for the less educated clergy and the laity.<sup>217</sup> The language and spelling seem to indicate a Northern dialect, which would fit with the time period of the founding of the Carthusian monastery in Mount Grace in Yorkshire in 1397

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<sup>215</sup> *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, usually thought to have been written by Johannes de Caulibus sometime in the fourteenth century, was an immensely popular text that was translated into English, French, Italian, German, and Dutch and is found all over Europe. Forty-four copies survive in English libraries. Little is known about Johannes de Caulibus, who was identified by Benedetto Bonelli in his eighteenth century compilation of Bonaventura's works *Prodromus ad Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae* (Sargent, *Blessed Life*, xvi-xix). Nicholas Love's version remains, either in full or in part, in seventy manuscripts and early printings (Sargent, *Blessed Life*, lxxii-lxxxvi).

<sup>216</sup> Elizabeth Zeeman and Michael Sargent both point to this connection, which is worth quoting here: "who so wole more pleyntly b[e] enfourmed & tauht in English tonge lete him loke þe tretees at þe worþi clerk & holi lyuere Maister Walter Hilton þe Chanon of Thurgarton wrote in english by grete grace & hye discrecion & he shal fynde þere as I leue a sufficient scole & a trewe of alle þesse." See Elizabeth Zeeman, "Nicholas Love – A Fifteenth-Century Translator" *The Review of English Studies, New Series*, Vol. 6, No. 22 (Apr., 1955), 115; Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 124).

<sup>217</sup> The Carthusian Charterhouses of the fifteenth century were well known as repositories for manuscripts of all kinds and since the three remaining texts of the Middle English version are all of Carthusian origin, it has long been assumed that M.N. was a Carthusian monk (Doyle 226-27).



and the Sheen monastery in 1414.

Love chose for his text the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, which breaks down the life of Christ into seven readings spanning all four of the Gospels, one for each day of the week. Each of the stories concentrates on the humanity of Christ and provides specific images on which the reader may meditate. The book was popular from the date of its writing until the Reformation in England and appears in more than seventy manuscripts, many of which were owned by lay families and female religious houses.<sup>218</sup> The text of the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* is compiled with various works by Hilton, particularly the *Mixed Life*, and Rolle. One of the manuscripts Sargent uses for his edition, Cambridge University Library, MS Additional 6686 contains Lydgate's *Kings of England*, a politically charged and popular poem chronicling the history of England from William the Conqueror to Henry VI.<sup>219</sup> The juxtaposition of these works may indicate a lay interest in Love's *Blessed Life*.

Love translated his work from the Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi* and cut down the original 161 chapters to a mere sixty-three; he kept many of the more evocative images from the original to use as centerpieces for meditation. This is important to our understanding of translation at the time, particularly translation that had the purpose of providing guidance to the laity in

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<sup>218</sup> Sargent chronicles the seventy manuscripts in his introduction to the text. Sargent, *Blessed Life*, lxxii-lxxxvi.

<sup>219</sup> Linne Mooney testifies to the political nature of the poem and its use as propaganda to support Henry VI's right to the throne. Linne R. Mooney, "Lydgate's 'Kings of England' and Another Verse Chronicle of the Kings," *Viator*, 20 (1989).

the life of contemplation. Love spells out his methods throughout the text, which may give insight to the other works in this study, especially M.N.'s *Mirror*.

Love's translation sets out to put Christ's humanity in the forefront of the Gospel stories so that it can be used for meditation. For example, after Jesus is tempted in the desert and resists three times, Love presents us with the image of Christ sitting alone and being fed by the angels. He asks his readers to imagine what kind of food Christ would have eaten there. He is quick to note, however, that this is for meditation purposes only, so it is not important what he ate, but that his readers connect to the human Jesus: "we mowe here ymagine by reson & ordeyne þis worþi fest as vs likeþ, not by errour affermyng bot deuoutly ymaginyng & supposyng, & þat aftur þe comune kynde of þe manhode."<sup>220</sup>

The reading mixes brief images of Christ's divinity — telling us that after defeating Satan, Christ is carried into heaven by the angels where they ask him his will — with more specifics about his humanity — Christ tells the angels to go to the house of his mother and fetch him the food from her table "for þer is none bodily mete so lykyng to me as þat is of hir dighting."<sup>221</sup> The angels travel to his home and after greeting Mary and telling them of her son's request, "the angeles tokene with a lofe & a towel, & oþer necessaryes, & brouhten to Jesu & perantere þerwiþ a fewe smale fishes þat oure lady hade ordeynet þen, as god wolde."<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 74, ll. 39-45.

<sup>221</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 75, ll. 42-43.

<sup>222</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 76, ll. 2-5.

Love describes in the passages that follow how the angels spread the towel on the ground and lay the food out, say grace, and let Jesus break his fast, making the image as down-to-earth as he can and so transforming a work of deep spiritual mystery – the temptation in the desert – into a text easy for unsophisticated readers to relate to.

Love interrupts the narrative with his own note — in a format that will be discussed further below — first speaking to solitaries and advising them that when they eat alone they should imagine that Christ eats with them in the manner described. Love then condenses Christ's journey home to his mother, the assembling of the Apostles, and the beginning of Christ's ministry. He warns his readers that he is condensing here by saying that the

long werke & peraventure tedious bope to þe rederes & þe hereres hereof, if alle þe processe of þe blessed life of Jesu shold be wryten in englishe so fully by meditaciones as it is yit hidereto, aftur þe processe of þe boke before nemede of Bonaventure in latyne. Perfore here aftur many chapitres & longe processe þat semeþ litel edificacion inne, as to þe maner of symple folk þat þis boke is specialy writen to shal be laft vnto it drawe to þe passion, þe which with þe grace of Jesu shale be more pleynty continuede, as þe matere þat is most nedeful & most edifying.<sup>223</sup>

Love does not reproduce all of the stories of the Gospels, and is forthright about the cuts he has made, but promises his readers and listeners that he will not skip over the important parts. In this manner he acts as a guide through the stories of the Gospels without specifically citing the Gospels – he not only re-tells the story, but also gives instruction along the way about why the story is important and how

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<sup>223</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 77-78, ll 42ff.

the reader or listener should use the work to meditate. In essence, the reader receives the guidance needed to read the stories without having to employ a mentor or join the clergy. His intent at guiding his readers is completely transparent.

Love makes his guidance clear through his glosses as well by following a formula similar to the one used by M.N. in the translation of the *Mirouer*. He indicates his glosses clearly so that they might be separated from the main text of the work by placing initials in the margins to separate the original text being translated from any additions.<sup>224</sup> This textual style is rare enough that there is an indication of some relation between the works. Love's reasoning for clearly marking his own glosses may mirror M.N.'s, giving us another reason to include him in this Yorkshire circle. In earlier works, glosses could easily be absorbed into the text, but with the fear of Lollard additions to approved works, as we have seen in Archbishop Thoresby's *Catechism* for example, it was important that works of translation were kept as "pure" as possible. Using this formula, the translator could add as much as he thought useful for his readers without compromising the text or risking censure for heretical thoughts. The words of

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<sup>224</sup> Sargent translates the passage where this is explained by Love: "Note, reader of the following book written in English, that wherever the letter 'N' is placed in the margin, the words are added by the translator or compiler beyond those in the Latin book of the *Meditation of the Life of Christ* written, according to common opinions, by the venerable doctor Bonaventure. And when it returns to the narrative and the words of that doctor, then the letter 'B' is inserted in the margin, as will be readily apparent to whoever reads or examines this book of *The Mirror of the Life of Christ*" (Sargent, *Blessed Life*, xxx.) The selection quoted above, for example, is set off from the text with an 'N' in the margins, and immediately afterward, as he returns to the story of Christ's life, he marks a 'B' in the margins.

“Bonaventure” were clear, while the additions of the translator were simply a guide by a lesser mind to make the deeper thoughts (or as M.N. put it, “the dark speche”) of the text more understandable to the common reader.<sup>225</sup> As in the case described above, Love uses these asides to compress his re-writing of the life of Christ, but also to give easy-to-understand meditation points that can be used without too much imagination on the part of his readers or listeners, concentrating on the humanity around Christ and his miracles. Here, as we see in the case of M.N., the notes not only provide guidance, but they make the message of the translated work relevant to the daily lives of his listeners.

Aside from providing the main body of his *Blessed Life* to his readers for meditation purposes, Love makes clear that he has another purpose. The proem spells out a direct interest in combating Lollardy and there are many passages aimed directly at the sentiments expressed in the *Twelve Conclusions of Lollardy*. Love’s purpose is to point out the arrogance of the Lollards who think they can read Scripture without the guidance of the Church. His concern, and the concern of all of the Yorkshire writers, is that Wyclif’s idea of a literal reading of the Bible was affecting every aspect of lay understanding of clerical guidance. Kantik Ghosh sums up Wycliffite thought by describing three central elements:

a Bible liberated from a corrupt academia and its associated intellectual

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<sup>225</sup> Sargent adds: “It is obvious from this that it was particularly important to Nicholas Love, or to the ecclesiastical authorities to whom he submitted his translation, that the material that he personally added to the *Meditationes* should be distinguishable from his source-text. On the other hand, we should note that the apparatus also signals the material cited by Love from sources outside the *Meditationes*, and some of his re-arrangements of the material of the *Meditationes* as well” (Sargent, *Blessed Life*, xxx).

practices, as well as its perceived values and norms; a Bible self-consciously made accessible to a readership considered – at least theoretically – to be ‘simple’ and unlearned; the above processes seen as culminating in, indeed constituting, a return to the lost truths of Christ, of the apostles, and of the *ecclesia primitiva*.<sup>226</sup>

To counteract this, Love spends a great deal of his time demonstrating the humility one must have in the contemplative life in order to see the deeper truths of the Gospels and to understand that one needs help to do this. The “proheme” confirms this in two ways: the first is to set the images of Christ’s Passion so that “a symple soule þat kan not þenke bot bodyes or bodily þinges mowe haue somewhat accordynge vnto is affeccion where wiþ he maye fede & stire his deuocion [...]”; the second is to supplement and support the text as often as possible with the words of other writers, as Love does right from the start, citing Bernard, Gregory, and of course Bonaventure, the supposed author of the text he is translating in the proem.

Love’s major contribution to the work, beyond the translation of the original *Meditationes*, is a section called “A shorte tretes of þe hiest and moste worþi sacrament of cristes blessedde body & þe merueiles þerof,” a defense of the sacrament of the Eucharist so specifically aimed at Lollardy that his examples seem organized to refute each of the *Conclusions* one by one. He begins with a quotation from the Psalms, which he argues demonstrates that the Eucharist was foretold in the Old Testament and that this sacrament should be the central focus for all Christian people:

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<sup>226</sup> Kantik Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-2.

Pis mete is þat gostly mete of þe blessedde body of oure lorde Jesu in þe sacrament of þe awtere þat he of his souereyn mercy giveþ euery day in forme of brede to alle þoo þat trewly dreden him as hir lorde god, by þe whiche drede, þei kepen hem out of dedely sinne, & mekely standen in þe stedefast byleue of holi chirch.<sup>227</sup>

Love states that all those who do not recognize the sacrament as the actual body and blood of Christ are false heretics and “disciples of Anticrist þat bene clepede Lollardes,” who have

made mich dissension & diuision in holy church, & putte many men in to errour of þis blessedde sacrament, by þe fals doctrine of hir maistere þe wech þorh his grete clergy & kunnyng of philosophye was deceyuede in þat he gaf more credence to þe doctrine of Arestotele þat stant onely in naturele reson of man þan he dide to þe doctrine of holy chirch & þe trewe doctours þerof touching þis precieuse sacrament.<sup>228</sup>

While the other writers in this survey are less directed in their arguments against heresy, so that scholars can identify multiple concerns in the writing, it is clear that Love writes against Lollardy and the division it has caused. Considering the fact that the papacy itself is in schism during this period, with a line of popes living in Rome and another line residing in Avignon and all of Christendom being forced to choose between them, it is interesting that in the quotation above Love puts the blame for division in the Church on the Lollards, instead of on the confusion produced by the Church’s own hierarchy.

The body of this treatise addresses very specific Lollard beliefs, namely the falseness of transubstantiation, the ineffectiveness of clerics living in sin to

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<sup>227</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 225, ll. 10-16.

<sup>228</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 238, ll. 34-41.

perform the sacraments, the foolishness of belief in relics, the uselessness of pilgrimage and the prayers for the dead. He cites reliable sources like Gregory the Great and Hugh, a bishop of Lincoln and “first Monke of þe ordre of Charthous & Prior of Witham.”<sup>229</sup> Hugh would be very important to Carthusians working in a relatively young house, such as Mount Grace, as Witham was one of the first English Charterhouses and Gregory’s authority has already been noted among the Yorkshire writers. He divides both those who believe and those who do not into two groups: those who believe can either “dreden god as seruantes dreden hir lorde, leuyng & eschewyng to sinne onely for drede of peyne,” or “dreden god as trew children dreden to offende hir fadere,” while those who do not believe can either be those that “drede not to receyue þis holiest sacrament in dedely sinne, or elles by defaut of drede contynuene in hir sinne” or “lakken þe drede of god bene heritykes, þe whch in defaut of buxom drede to god & holy chirch presumptuosly leuyng vpon hir owne bodily wittes & kyndely reson.”<sup>230</sup>

Love covers all contingencies by addressing those who are using the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* within the framework of orthodoxy as a guide for both meditation and an understanding of the life of Christ. Though this work may not seem to have the same content as a work like M.N.’s *Mirror* or any of the other attempts at describing the life of contemplation discussed in this chapter, the guidance it provides addresses the same desire of the Yorkshire circle’s audience,

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<sup>229</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 232, ll. 2-3.

<sup>230</sup> Sargent 227, ll. 5-6; 16-18; 23-26.



the lay desire to achieve an understanding of works normally reserved for the clergy, whether prompted by the Lollard heresy or by the more orthodox movements created by Rolle's teachings or Thoresby's *Catechism* as described in Chapter 2. In essence, by addressing concerns about the Lollard heresy, Love is able to deflect the Wycliffite desire for a Bible "uncorrupted" by academia with a straightforward text about the deeper mysteries of the Christian beliefs, a life of the human Christ imbued with warnings about the guidance required to understand the divine aspects of the Gospels.

His exempla are direct. At one point he relates a miracle in which a woman, who does not believe that the bread of the Eucharist is the body of Christ because she made the bread used for the ceremony and who laughs at the Eucharist, only to see that the priest's prayers have changed the bread into an actual finger dripping blood.<sup>231</sup> He relates how men lost at sea are miraculously saved by a mass said by their friends and families. He tells of a clergyman held in purgatory for simony who is released because of masses said for him, a result that has to be taken on faith.

Love aims specifically at the Lollard belief that a priest living in sin cannot perform the Eucharist by telling of a priest who confesses to "seynt Hugh" that when he was young, he was a sinful man. Love writes what the priest tells the saint:

And vpon a day as I was att my messe in tyme of þe conecracion felle to  
my mynde þe grete horrible sinne þat I hade so longe tyme contynuede in.  
& among opere wrecchede þouhtes of my blynde herte. I þouht in þis

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<sup>231</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 232-233.

manere, Lorde whepere þat precious body in flesh & blode of my lorde Jesu þat is clepede þe brihtnes of euerlastyng life, & þat gostely mirrour of þe godhede without wemme. is now made, tretede & receyuede verreyly of me so foule & abhominable sinnere. And so hauyng sech vnthrifty þouhtes, when it came to þe tyme of þe fraction & as þe vse is I hade broken þe hooste in tweyn anone fresh blode ranne out þerof & þat part þat I helde in my hande was turnede in to flesh & all ouere wete with þe rede blode.<sup>232</sup>

By telling this story as the words of the saint and by way of an eyewitness with such graphic details, Love directly states that the belief the Lollards hold about priests and the sacraments is false.

Love always comes back to the idea that those who live simply by reason and by the evidence of their senses are heretics and fools who will be punished by God, while those who live simply by faith in the Eucharist will be rewarded. This fits in well with the writings of the other members of the Yorkshire circle discussed here — certainly the *Cloud*-author and the *Chastising*-author are reflected here. But it also fits in well with the anti-intellectualism of Marguerite's *Mirror*, and the death of reason, which will be discussed in the next chapter.<sup>233</sup>

Another tie between the *Mirror* and the *Blessed Life* is that both works list their approbations at the beginning of the texts. While this is not unusual for a work devotion, particularly by the end of the fourteenth century, both books seem to have had a more political motivation for their approbations. The *Blessed Life* received the approbation of Archbishop Arundel's *Constitutions*, the only work

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<sup>232</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 233-234.

<sup>233</sup> In the *Mirror*, the allegorical figure of Reason dies when confronted by the inexplicable eternal love of God (Doiron 319).

extant to do so, but it may indicate the use of political connections in order to broaden the circulation of the text. M.N. lists the approbations, whose authors show a range of backgrounds friendly to women writers, Cistercian and Franciscan in particular, in addition to a well-regarded theologian Godfrey of Fontaines.<sup>234</sup> As a translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, the *Blessed Life* was meant to serve as an acceptable rendering of accounts re-told from the Gospels and deemed acceptable for a wider and less-educated audience. Hughes sees the relationship between Arundel and Love as being similar to the relationship between Thoresby and Gaytrick described in the last chapter, saying that while “Thoresby and Gaytrick provided, in the *Lay Folks’ Catechism*, a guide to the moral principles and social conduct of the active life; Love and Arundel were responsible for a guide to the emotional and spiritual values appropriate to those living ‘a perfighte actyf lyfe.’”<sup>235</sup>

Like the other authors discussed in this chapter, Love wrote to stem the tide of “amateur enthusiasm for the eremitic life and striving for supernatural experiences,” that fill the works of Rolle.<sup>236</sup> By delivering a straightforward life of Christ, Love gave his readers a form of the Gospels that was safe from misreading, in essence answering the Lollard demand for an English translation of

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<sup>234</sup> For M.N.’s approbations see Doiron 249-250. Kerby-Fulton addresses the importance of this range of approbation in *Books Under Suspicion* (Kerby-Fulton 278-280).

<sup>235</sup> Hughes 231.

<sup>236</sup> Hughes 231.

the Gospels without giving them a text they could misuse.

Love gave the devout laity a simple, easy-to-understand book about the human life and death of Christ. As Love himself puts it,

scripture and writynge for the fructuose mater ther of sterynge specially to the love of Jesu semeþ amonge opere souereynly edifienge to symple creatures; þe whiche as children nede to be fedde with mylke of lyght doctrine and not with sadde mete of grete clergie and highe contemplacioun.<sup>237</sup>

The text does not engage in discussion about entering into a unity with God, or the special feelings that come from Rolle's enthusiastic devotion, but follows instead Walter Hilton's advice about concentrating on the human life of Christ.

Nicholas Love is the most transparent of the four writers surveyed here in writing about his purpose, directly stating his need to write this book for "symple souls." The last thought in the main body of his translation, before the end of the text about the Eucharist, are: "we shole speke sumwhat more to confort of hem þat treuly byleuen, & to confusion of alle fals lollardes & heritykes Amen."<sup>238</sup>

While the premise of Love's *Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* is different from the other texts described in this chapter and the *Mirror*, in that its guidance is centered on the life of Christ rather than on a direct description of the contemplative life, it connects with M.N.'s translation in several important ways: Love's intratextual comments are set off in much the same way as M.N.'s; it is written for a Latin-illiterate audience; and its author shares Mount Grace with

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<sup>237</sup> Sargent, *Blessed Life*, 10. Sargent also explains in his Introduction (xxxix) how this is an echoing of the phrasing from 1 Cor. 3:1-3. This expression is popular among the Yorkshire writers.

<sup>238</sup> Sargent 223, chapter lxxiii.

another translator of the *Mirror*, Richard Methley, which indicates that a copy of the *Mirror* must have been kept at Mount Grace at some point. In comparing the *Mirror* to Love's *Blessed Life*, evidence for a similar motivation between the works can be seen: they are both commenting on the difficult parts of a work they have deemed important for amateur contemplatives with an eye toward keeping them away from heretical interpretations. Since Love was so direct about his purposes, it is possible to extrapolate a deeper understanding of the motivations behind the *Mirror*. While M.N.'s motivations can not be proven to match Love's exactly, they are certainly working along similar principles and have a similar goal in mind, demonstrating that M.N. has a post-Wyclif-era mindset that would not have existed nearly a half century before.

The next chapter examines M.N.'s translation of the *Mirouer* and the manuscripts in which it was included to see where he fits among these writers. The Yorkshire circle created a textual community that was responding to the rising demand for mystical texts among a Latin-illiterate and theologically unproven audience. By creating works that offered guidance and warning through the difficult task of understanding mysticism, they provided a grounding that made mysticism digestible for a wider audience, while reining in the desire for visions and heavenly connections during a chaotic time for the Church.

## Chapter 4

### IN M.N.'S OWN WORDS

This chapter focuses on three methods of examining M.N.'s translation that demonstrate its interconnectedness with the Yorkshire writers discussed in the previous chapter. The first is to look at various images employed by M.N. in the writing of his prologue and glosses and to see how well they fit with the works discussed previously. Some of the images are centuries old, borrowed from Augustine, the Victorine writers, the Church Fathers, and other scholars of the Church, but used in a way that echoes Hilton and the other writers of Yorkshire. The work done by M.N. to transform a work that had been condemned for heresy, whether he was aware of it or not, fits him into the circle of the Yorkshire writers who were aware of how works of contemplation could be misunderstood or misused by a Latin-illiterate audience. By 1395, the *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* had been brought before Parliament, clarifying Lollard thought into a mode of thought the Church could designate as heresy, and so we see that Nicholas Love is able to directly address certain beliefs, while Hilton and the two anonymous authors respond to more nebulous concerns. M.N. seems to fall into this earlier camp, perhaps writing before Lollardy was deemed a specific target for the Church's efforts, but his concerns are still focused on the dangers of misunderstanding concepts that were the focus of the early Lollards and M.N.'s approach seems similar to that used by the fourteenth century writers discussed in the previous chapter.

The second method is a look at the translation itself. In 1999, Geneviève Hasenohr reported her discovery of an excerpt of the French *Mirouer des Simples Ames* in a fifteenth-century manuscript from the Bibliothèque municipale of Valenciennes (MS 239) among several other theological texts.<sup>239</sup> Inserted into the text of Hugh of St. Victor's *De arrha animae* are two chapters of the roughly one hundred thirty-nine found in the only other extant French manuscript — the Chantilly manuscript (Musée Condé F xiv 26), which can be dated as late as the end of the sixteenth century. The reason for the chapters' inclusion here is unclear, but it is possible that the text of the French *De arrha animae* — a text that was not translated into English during the period under discussion — may offer some evidence as to the compiler's intent. Though the Valenciennes manuscript is from the early fifteenth century, the section from the *Mirouer* is written in the Picard dialect, which is more likely the dialect Marguerite Porete would use as she is thought to be from the Hainaut region of France. Perhaps, then, the scribe may have been using older manuscripts from different eras for each of the works in the manuscript.<sup>240</sup> This find, though only a fragment of Marguerite Porete's

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<sup>239</sup> Hasenohr 1352.

<sup>240</sup> Geneviève Hasenohr writes: "Under a thin layer of 'modernization,' the written word-forms and the word-order of the pieces that interest us preserve features from a previous stage of [the French] language's development. In addition, comparison with the [same manuscript's] copy of Gerson's treatises shows a difference in age that would not have been there if the base texts had dated to the same time period. Although people continued to copy this type of artificial anthology in the second half of the fifteenth century, they did not create new ones. The great wave of compilations made up of eclectic short works and anonymous extracts was over [by 1450]. From then on, people [tended to] separate out individual texts and to reproduce them in full." (Hasenohr 1356).

*Mirouer*, affords us the opportunity to see the changes that were made by the various editors of the work. In the second section of this chapter, this fragment is examined alongside the corresponding Middle English (and Chantilly) sections to see where changes may have been made in content and nuance. While we cannot be sure that M.N. edited the text in this way, a number of the changes – chapter length and word choices primarily – correspond with changes in other English translations made at the end of the fourteenth century, such as Hilton’s work on the *Stimulus Amoris*. The Valenciennes fragment falls outside the bulk of M.N.’s glosses, but there is enough material in it to at least begin to understand how M.N.’s work fits in the textual community that existed around the interests of the Yorkshire circle in the last quarter of the fourteenth century.

Last, the third method examines the three extant manuscripts of M.N.’s *Mirror*: British Library, MS Additional 37790; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 505, and Cambridge, St. John’s College, MS 71. While each of these manuscripts have Carthusian provenance, it seems that each was used in different ways and possibly for different audiences, which may grant some insight into who might have wanted the text of the *Mirror* and for what purposes. The Oxford manuscript also contains the *Chastising of God’s Children* and the British Library manuscript (hereafter referred to as the Amherst manuscript) contains several Rolle pieces, both English works and works translated from the Latin, linking both manuscripts to the Yorkshire writers of the past. By examining the other texts that are compiled with the *Mirror* and the comments written in the margins,



a picture of how these manuscripts were employed might help explain why the *Mirror* was translated.

These three methods demonstrate that the text of the *Mirror* must have appeared in the decades after the appearance of Wyclif's writings and the emergence of the concerns with Lollardy, as well as the rising interest in contemplation among female religious and lay readers as expressed by the translation of important Continental works. M.N.'s own thoughts about the text of the *Mirror*, his translation of the difficult words, and the texts that were compiled with the *Mirror* all help to justify including M.N. in the Yorkshire circle of writers that existed at the end of the fourteenth century.

### 1. M.N.'s Glosses

M.N. begins his translation with a short prologue of his own – before Marguerite Porete's own prologue – that explains several things about the work and why he is undertaking it. The prologue is broken into three parts. In the first, the translator gives a short history of his relationship with the *Mirror*, explaining that this is the second time he is translating this work and praying for the guidance of Jesus Christ to give him the grace and true sight “to do þis werk to his worschip and plesaunce, profite also and encres of grace to goostli louers, þat ben disposed and clepid to þis highe eleccion of þe fredom of soule.” The second part is something of a reader's guide, warning that the book may be “drie and vnsaueri” to those who are just beginning to study it, but that once grace has touched that student “þanne it sauoureþ þe soule so sweteli þat sche desireþ

greetli to haue of it more and more, and pursueþ þeaftir.”<sup>241</sup> The third part is about the technical matters surrounding the manuscript, two of which are most important to this dissertation. First, the book is a difficult one where “loue,” who is one of the main characters of the dialogue, often keeps the “touches of his diuine werkis priueli hid vnder derk speche” and so M.N. has devised a method by which he can insert his own words “in a maner of glose,” which he will indicate by bracketing his comments with his initials, “M.N.” The second is that the book is from a French book that is “yuel writen,” so he has had to replace words here and there where needed to make the work make sense.<sup>242</sup>

Perhaps most important to this discussion is that he tells us that he is re-working an earlier translation “bicause I am enfourmed þat some wordis þereof haue be mystake.” He hopes that by correcting the errors, that, “bi grace of oure Lord goode God it schal þe more profite to þe auditors.”<sup>243</sup> His intended audience becomes more defined later in the prologue when he states: “And some poyntes loue declareþ in þree dyuerse wises acordyng to oon. Oon maner sche delareþ to actifes, the secunde to contemplatife, and þe þridde to comune peple.”<sup>244</sup> In the

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<sup>241</sup> It is interesting to note that he refers to his imagined reader as “sche,” although he expects the audience to include “actifes,” “contemplatifes,” and “comune peple.” See Doiron 248.

<sup>242</sup> All quotations in this paragraph are from Doiron 247-249.

<sup>243</sup> Doiron 247.

<sup>244</sup> Doiron 248. The phrase “comune peple,” according to the Middle English dictionary, specifically refers to a non-clerical or secular group.

edition of M.N.'s *Mirror*, Marilyn Doiron notes that this is "the translator's classification of the three types or states of life."<sup>245</sup> But the three states of life were not really considered to include a non-clerical group until Walter Hilton's *Mixed Life*.<sup>246</sup> The fact that M.N. has a broader audience in mind than the cloistered contemplatives and active, secular priests is just one of the indications that the translator belongs among the Yorkshire writers outlined in the second chapter.

At the beginning of the translator's prologue is a quotation attributed to "the prophete." In what appears to be a simple humility trope, M.N. warns would-be readers that he has already failed at translating the book, as described above. It is unclear whether by using the term "mystake" he means simply that his translation was poor or that what he translated was error on the level of heresy. He tells his readers that he is a

creature *right* wrecchid and vnable to do eny such werk, poore and nakid  
of goostli fruytes, derked wiþ synnes and defautes, envirownd and  
wrapped þereinne ofte tymes, þe whiche bynemeþ me my taast and my  
clear sight þat litil I haue of goostli vndirstondinge and lasse of þe

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<sup>245</sup> Doiron 248.

<sup>246</sup> Ogilvie-Thomson discusses the implications of including the laity in the three lives: "[...] the extension of the principles given by Gregory for those with pastoral responsibilities to temporal men with worldly goods and dependents seems to be Hilton's own contribution. [...] Hilton's application of the principles of the *Reg. Past.* [*Regula Pastoralis*] to temporal men with riches and position goes beyond Gregory's actual teaching, though it is consistent with his principles." Ogilvie-Thomson explains that while Gregory did allow that the laity might be included in the "mixed life," he was referring more to pastors who had to balance their lives between good works among their flocks and their own time for prayer and contemplation. See Ogilvie-Thomson, *Mixed Life*, 15 note 154.

felynges of diuine loue.<sup>247</sup>

He completes his explanation of why he should not do the job and why his words are not to be trusted by quoting the words of “þe prophete: My teeth ben not white to bite of þis breed.”<sup>248</sup>

This quotation has gone unidentified for some time, and has mostly been dismissed as a humility trope designed to show the translator’s worthlessness in the face of the deep topics at hand. Prophets who carry a particularly harsh message tend to make it clear that the words they are about to speak are not their own, but come from God and so even though the speaker does not deserve attention, the words he speaks do. The fact that M.N. is using a similar technique elevates both his own status and the status of the work he is about to undertake. But here, M.N. is vague in his quotation – he does not identify the prophet he quotes and so far no Biblical quotation has been found to match his usage here. J. C. Marler and Judith Grant, in the supplement to the 1999 translation of the *Mirror*, suggest that the quotation might have been a proverb rather than a quote from a prophet and the copyist miswrote the word, but that has been the most attention this strange quotation has garnered, and it has not helped in isolating the source.<sup>249</sup> Since the quotation seems ultimately to be a simple trope employed by

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<sup>247</sup> Doiron 247.

<sup>248</sup> Doiron 247.

<sup>249</sup> J. C. Marler and Judith Grant (trans.), *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, with an introductory interpretative essay by Edmund Colledge, O.S.A., (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 178.

a translator to aggrandize the text over his own fallible translation of the work, the source has not been pursued.

In the other quotations employed throughout the glosses, M.N. usually adds either the name of the writer (as is the case later in the prologue where he quotes the psalms and says “do ye as David seiþ in þe sawtere”<sup>250</sup>) or specifies that the quotation is from the “holi writ” (as he does in his seventh gloss when referring to Paul’s letter to the Romans).<sup>251</sup> He uses eight quotations throughout his glosses and prologue: two are unattributed, five specify either writer or “holi writ” as stated above, and only this one refers to the unnamed “prophete.”<sup>252</sup> Without a Biblical reference, it seems reasonable that this quotation might have originated with a contemporary author known to M.N. and perhaps his audience. While there are several images used by other writers of the period that come close to the subject matter of bread and teeth, the closest match is in the second book of Walter Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection*, Chapter 43: “But sotheli him nedeth for to han white teeth and scharpe and wel piked that schulde biten on this goostli breed, for fleschli loveres and heretikes mowe not touche the inli flour of it.”<sup>253</sup> The image is even repeated later in the chapter when Hilton writes, “And I hope that

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<sup>250</sup> Doiron 248.

<sup>251</sup> Doiron 262.

<sup>252</sup> In Doiron’s edition, M.N. employs eight quotations not in the original *Mirouer* and they appear on 248, 251, 255, 256, 262, 304-305 (contains two of the quotations), 313-314.

<sup>253</sup> *Scale* 2, ll. 3326-3328.

he schal not erren, bi so that his teeth, that aren his inli wittes, be kepid white and clene from goostli pride and from curiousté of kyndeli witte.”<sup>254</sup>

The problem with the connection between M.N.’s prologue and Hilton’s *Scale*, however, is two-fold: the first is that both uses of the image in Chapter 44 have a different form from the one M.N. uses. In his prologue, M.N. shares the idea with the author of his quote that it is the “prophete’s” teeth that are not white enough to eat of the metaphorical bread. But in Hilton’s quotations, he is talking about a hypothetical man who would need to refrain from worldly meats that would sully his white teeth, rendering them unworthy of the words of the Gospels. He is by no means insinuating that it is his own teeth that are the problem. The second problem is the attribution M.N. uses – no contemporary would have referred to Walter Hilton as a prophet.

John Clark and Rosemary Dorward suggest that the image of the white teeth comes from Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.6.7, which itself refers to *Canticle* 4.2.<sup>255</sup> Augustine discusses the use of figurative language in Christianity in this passage and argues with those who wish that the holy men would speak plainly. He states:

how is it, I say, that if a man says this, he does not please his hearer so much as when he draws the same meaning from that passage in Canticles, where it is said of the Church, when it is being praised under the figure of a beautiful woman, ‘Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are shorn which came up from the washing, whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren among them?’ Does the hearer learn anything more than

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<sup>254</sup> *Scale II*, ll 3364-3365.

<sup>255</sup> *Scale* 326, note 373.

when he listens to the same thought expressed in the plainest language, without the help of this figure? And yet, I don't know why, I feel greater pleasure in contemplating holy men, when I view them as the teeth of the Church, tearing men away from their errors, and bringing them into the Church's body, with all their harshness softened down, just as if they had been torn off and masticated by the teeth.<sup>256</sup>

This passage evokes M.N.'s own use of the image of the white teeth and bread to describe the difficulty of the words and the ideas in the work he is about to translate. While it is not a perfect match, there is something in Augustine's use of the metaphorical language that M.N. might have been tapping into when he employed the quote in his own prologue, warning his readers that the images are not to be taken literally. This is a theme M.N. returns to in his later glosses. He also discusses later in the prologue how the main character in the *Mirror – Love –* “leieþ to soules þe touches of his diuine werkis priueli hid vndir derk speche, for þei schulde taaste þe depper draughtes of his loue and drinke.”<sup>257</sup> Perhaps both Hilton and M.N. are reminding their readers and giving them a taste of how metaphorical language needs to be mulled over in regards to their respective works. The image itself from the *Song of Songs* 4.2 (“Thy teeth as flocks of sheep, that are shorn which come up from the washing, all with twins, and there is none barren among them.”) does not seem directly relevant to M.N.'s or Hilton's

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<sup>256</sup> J. F. Shaw (trans.), *On Christian Doctrine in Four Books*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, date unknown), Book 2, Chapter 6, section 7, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/doctrine.vii\\_1.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/doctrine.vii_1.html).

<sup>257</sup> Doiron 248.

quotations.<sup>258</sup>

Michael Sargent has added to the connection with the *Song of Songs* passage by suggesting that Hilton created his image by looking at how Gregory the Great employed this passage to help explain *Job* 13:14 (“Why do I tear my flesh with my teeth, and carry my soul in my hands?”) in *Moralia in Job* XI, XXXIII, section 45.<sup>259</sup> Gregory explains that teeth have come to represent both the preachers of the Church and the inward senses by which all men learn to recognize the word of God, and so anyone who uses their teeth to chew the worldly meat

[...] feeds in the gratification of the present life, [and] has the interior perceptions tied fast, that they should no longer be able to eat, i.e. to understand spiritual things; in that from the very self-same cause that they gratify themselves in outward things, they are rendered dull in those of the interior. And whereas the soul is fed with sin, it is unable to eat the bread of righteousness, in that the teeth being tied fast by the custom of sin, can never at all chew such good, as has a relish in the interior.<sup>260</sup>

Gregory translates the passage from *Job* 13:14 as “Why with my interior perceptions do I hunt out things carnal, if there be any such thing done in me, if I cannot thereby benefit my spectators?”<sup>261</sup> This last seems to touch on Hilton’s meaning nearly completely and seems quite possibly the source of both uses.

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<sup>258</sup> Richard Challoner (trans.), *Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible*, (Tan Books and Publisher, 1971), *Canticles* 4.2, <http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>.

<sup>259</sup> *Job* 13:14.

<sup>260</sup> Gregory the Great (trans. by Members of the English Church), *Morals on the Book of Job*, (Oxford, John Henry Parker; J.G.F. and J. Rivington, London, 1844), Book XI, Chapter XXXIII, section 45, <http://www.lectionarycentral.com/GregoryMoralia/Book11.html>.

<sup>261</sup> *Morals*, XI, XXXIII, 45.



Gregory's understanding of the passage also applies Augustine's image of the Church leaders as teeth softening up "error" to add to the Church's body to the individual who is grasping at understanding the difficult texts, and thus expands the image to a pious laity. Perhaps, M.N.'s quotation was well known at the time and that Hilton drew his image from Job and so M.N.'s use of it could properly, although indirectly, be attributed back to the prophet Job, but the only evidence for that is that M.N. did not feel the need to identify his prophet. Sargent further speculates that M.N. adds to this great chain back to Job, by linking a passage from Isaiah (6:5) in which it is written: "And I said: Woe is me, because I have held my peace; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people that hath unclean lips, and I have seen with my eyes the King the Lord of hosts."<sup>262</sup> So here we have two prophets to which M.N. may have been attributing this quotation, which was rendered for him in this form by Walter Hilton.

The *Moralia* and other works of Gregory the Great were employed frequently by the men who surrounded Thomas Arundel, both in his post as Bishop of Ely and his time as the Archbishop of York. Jonathan Hughes ties Gregory's teachings and the conundrum of the separate active and contemplative lives to the circle of scholars and teachers in York. The *Moralia* moved both John Wyclif and Walter Hilton to discuss how the two lives might be combined. Wyclif, in *De Civili Dominio*, claims that it would benefit the active clergy to live

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<sup>262</sup> Isaiah 6:5.

as contemplatives first, while Hilton extends the idea of mixing contemplation with the active life to create a more fulfilled life, even among the laity.<sup>263</sup> The *Moralia* also contains warnings about glossing a text, warning that “a commentator is rightly called an adulterator of the Word of God (*recte adulterare verbum dei dicitur*), [...] if he perversely desires to show off his knowledge and does not defer to the text.”<sup>264</sup> Considering the agitation in terms of both Lollard interest in having unadulterated texts and the fear that Lollardy was creeping into orthodox works, the *Moralia* was still influential for how the Yorkshire circle saw translation and teaching contemplation to the laity. Gregory’s insistence on the complete life of active works of charity and peaceful contemplation may explain why the Yorkshire writers took such pains to educate the laity while they tried to keep Lollardy in check.

Another image that M.N.’s prologue shares with the Yorkshire circle is the metaphor about “the kernel within the bark.” In M.N.’s prologue, a warning exists as to how this book should be read: “Therefore to þese soules þat ben disposed to þese highe felynges, loue haþ made of him þis boke *in* fulfillynge of her desire,

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<sup>263</sup> Hughes 252-54.

<sup>264</sup> Evans 116. Evans states: “In the *On Apostasy* of late 1380, he [Wyclif] refers to the casual way glossators can use their power to turn the old meaning of Scripture into a new meaning to suit themselves, deny the literal sense of the whole story of the actions of Christ and gloss the text as though it meant the very opposite, thus inserting into the Bible things which are not really there” (Evans 116-117.)

and often he leieþ þe note and þe kernel wiþinne þe schelle vnbroke.”<sup>265</sup> This is an image M.N. repeats in a later gloss, when M.N. tries to explain away the *Mirror*’s Soul taking leave of the Virtues. He gives a short explanation of how once the vices of everyday life have been overcome, the Soul has mastered the Virtues and so rises above the question of virtue or vice. He adds: “But o longe oon may bite on þe bitter bark of þe note, þat at þe laste he schal come to þe swete kernel.”<sup>266</sup> M.N.’s use of the image is fairly straightforward: the core of what is said in the *Mirror* is not always completely clear and one must gnaw at the difficult bark of the nut to get to the inner kernel. In the third gloss, after Love has told Reason that the Soul remains nothing after she has been united with God, M.N., in full sympathy with his readers and agreeing that the book is hard to understand, begs his audience “for þe loue of God, ye reders, demeþ not to soone, for I am siker þat who rediþ ouer þis booke bi good avisement twies or þries and be disposid to þo same felynges, þei schulen vndirstonde it wel ynowgh,” and closes with a warning that who so takes the “nakid wordis of scriptures and leueþ þe sentence, he may lightli erre,” a warning that could clearly be used against Lollard doctrine and others not traditionally educated in the text of the Bible.<sup>267</sup>

Walter Hilton uses the image of gnawing on the bark of a nut to get to the

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<sup>265</sup> Doiron 248.

<sup>266</sup> Doiron 255.

<sup>267</sup> Doiron 256.

kernel several times as well in the *Scale of Perfection*. The first use comes in Chapter 14 of *Scale 1*, and is also used in reference to the virtues. Here, Hilton warns that a man may labor under the virtues, knowing in his mind that it is a good thing to do, but not feeling it in his spirit. “But whanne bi the grace of gode Jhesu, and bi goostli and bodili exercise, reson is turnyd into light and wil into love, thanne hath he vertues in affeccion, for he hath so wel gnawen upon the bittir bark of the note that he hath broken it and fedeth him with the swete kinkel.”<sup>268</sup> This affection is what allows the contemplative to reach the highest levels of contemplation, which is defined earlier in the book.

The next appearance of the image of the nut comes in Chapter 20 of *Scale 1* where Hilton writes about the failure of “hypocrites and heretics.” He warns that

Ypocrites ne heretikes feele not this mekenesse, neither in good wille, ne in affeccioun; but wel drie and wel cold aren here hertis and here reynes fro the softe feelynge of this vertu; and so mykil thei aren the ferther fro it, that they wenen for to have it. Thei gnawen upoun the drie bark withoutyn, but the swete kinkel of it and the inli savoure may he not come to. Thei schewen outward mekenesse, in habite, in hooli speche, in loweli berynge, and, as it semeth, in many grete bodili and goostli vertues.<sup>269</sup>

Hilton applies this metaphor to those who look down on others and use their alleged humility as a sign of pride. The idea of the exteriority of the shell versus the interiority of the kernel is central here in regards to those who wear the guise of piety versus those who actually are pious.

The last appearance of this image comes in the same Chapter 43 of *Scale 2*

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<sup>268</sup> *Scale 1*, ll. 321-325.

<sup>269</sup> *Scale 1*, ll. 482-487.

in which the image of the “well picked teeth” belongs and it is linked with that image in a way that seems directed at the Lollard notion of being able to read scripture using their own knowledge:

Bi teeth aren undirstonden inli vertues of the soule, the whiche in fleschli loveres and in heretikes aren blodi, ful of synne and of wordli vanyté; thei wolden, and thei kunnen not, come bi the curiousté of her kyndeli wit to the sothfast knowynge of Holi Writ. For here witte is corrupt bi the original synne and actuel also, and is not yit heelid thorough grace, and therfore thei don but gnawen upon the bark withoute. Carpe thei nevere so moche thereof, the inli savoure withinne thei feelen not of. Thei aren not meke, thei aren not clene for to seen it; thei aren not frendis to Jhesu, and therfore He scheweth hem not His conceil.<sup>270</sup>

Here, Hilton – seemingly guided by the reference to teeth in the *Moralia* – specifically addresses those who would read the Gospels without guidance. The link between this image and M.N.’s then seems to indicate that M.N. is referring to these same thoughts with regards to those who would read the *Mirror* and attempt to rise to levels in contemplation normally reserved for those living the solitary life.

The image of the nut also appears in both the *Epistle of Prayer* and the *Cloud of Unknowing*. In Chapter 58, the *Cloud*-author uses saints Stephen and Martin as examples of men who had visions and advises his students that though these men witnessed the miracles described in their stories with their bodily eyes, it was really a way for God to communicate with them.

“Alle þe reuelacions þat euer sawe any man here in bodely licnes in þis liif, þei haue goostly bemenynges. & I trowe þat & þei vnto whome þei were schewid, or we for whome þei were schewid, had ben so goostly, or couþe haue conceyuid þeire bemenynges goostly, þat þan þei had neuer ben schewed bodily. & perfore late us pike of þe rough bark, & fede us of

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<sup>270</sup> *Scale* 1, ll. 3330-3337.

þe swete kyrnel.”<sup>271</sup>

He then goes on to explain how to do this in a manner unlike the manner of the “heretikes,” which he illustrates with the metaphor of a drunken man smashing a valuable cup after draining the liquor, by which he means it is not necessary that the body is despised or punished while the contemplative pursues spiritual experiences. He guides the young contemplative here away from fundamental readings of the text, that the message of the story is not the physical punishment, but the spiritual communication with God.

The *Cloud*-author uses the image again in his *Epistle of Prayer*, near the end of the treatise when he is trying to convince his addressee to be patient with his work at contemplation and prayer.

And þat þat þou felest it so harde & so streitliche stressing þin herte  
wiþouten coumforte in þe first biginnyng, þat [bemeneþ] þat þe greenes  
of þe frute hanging on þe tre, or elles newly pullid, eggen þi teeþ.  
Neuerþeles yit is speedful to þee; for it is no reson þat þou ete þe swete  
kirnel bot yif þou crakke first þe harde schelle & bite of þe bitter bark.  
Neuerþeles, yif it so be þat þi teeþ be weike, þat is to sey þi goostly  
mightes, þan it is my counsel þat þou seke sleigh<sup>tes</sup>, for ‘Betir is list þan  
leþir strengþe.’”<sup>272</sup>

Again the *Cloud*-author advises the student to understand that he should not worry if contemplation does not come easy or feel comfortable. The remarkable thing here, though, is that the *Cloud*-author uses Gregory’s explanation for the image of teeth as “goostly mightes” and that there is another unattributed proverb, both in a

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<sup>271</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 59.

<sup>272</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 106-107.

manner similar to M.N.'s use of the image in his prologue.<sup>273</sup>

While this one image does not definitively tie these authors together, the common use of it among this group of writers is important to see what they were trying to communicate and what works they were using to educate their students. Clark and Dorward made the connection between M.N.'s use of the "kernel within the bark" metaphor and Hilton's own use of the image, and points out that both are references to Guigo II's *Scala Claustralium*, a twelfth-century book written by the ninth prior of the Grande Chartreuse.<sup>274</sup> This would be unremarkable except that Guigo's book had been translated into English in the late-fourteenth or early-fifteenth century, possibly for the use of a group of nuns.<sup>275</sup> Guigo's use of this image is to describe the first two of the four rungs of his "ladder" of contemplation: reading and meditation. "Lesson is withouteforth in the barke; meditacion is withynforth in the pythe [...]"<sup>276</sup> Guigo explains that

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<sup>273</sup> See Edmund G. Gardner (ed.) *Henry Pepwell's Cell of Self-Knowledge*, (New York, Cooper Square Publishers, 1961), note 103, <http://www.ccel.org/g/gardner/cell/cell.htm>. It reads: "Better is art than evil strength. A proverbial expression. Cf. *Layamons Brut*, 17210 (ed Madden, ii. p. 297); *Ancren Riwe* (ed. Morton), p. 268 (where it is rendered: 'Skilful prudence is better than rude force'). Cf. Prov. xxi. 22."

<sup>274</sup> Clark and Dorward, 164-165 note 48. Hilton uses the image in *Scale* 1, Chapter 14, and *Scale* 2, Chapter 43.

<sup>275</sup> See Phyllis Hodgson, "'A Ladder of Foure Ronges by the Whiche Men mowe wele clyme to Heven.' A Study of the Prose Style of a Middle English Translation," *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Oct., 1949), 465. The Middle English title for the *Scala Claustralium* is *The Ladder of Foure Ronges* and travels with the *Cloud*-author's translation of *Benjamin Minor* in Cambridge manuscript Ff. vi 33.

<sup>276</sup> *Deonise* 101.

these four steps (the other two are prayer and contemplation) can also be related in terms of a student's progress: "The first degre is of begynners, the second of profiteris, the thridde of hem that be devoute, the fourth of hem *that* be holy & blissid of God."<sup>277</sup>

In all of the cases mentioned, the references to the image of the bark and the kernel is not linked in the text to the *Scala Claustralium*, and I suggest it is because Guigo's book was well known to the audience that the Yorkshire writers address. By making this image a commonplace in their work, the Yorkshire writers provide access Guigo's progression and diligence for their own students. James Walsh traced the image of one having to chew through bark to get at the kernel back to Augustine's *De quantitate animae* and both Walsh and Clark claim that it was a commonplace by the time Walter Hilton used it. However, like the first image of teeth being picked clean enough to eat of bread, this image seems to be particularly prevalent among the Yorkshire writers at the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>278</sup> M.N. seems to be use the image the same way as Hilton and the *Cloud*-author do, and while this is not a conclusive connection, it creates a strong argument that these books are interrelated as to purpose and style.

Two of the scholars who brought M.N.'s translation of the *Mirouer* to

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<sup>277</sup> *Deonise* 102. The fourteenth century translator of the *Ladder* moves a paragraph from a later chapter (XII) here that warns that these stages are a unit, that reading and meditation are nothing without prayer and contemplation and vice versa and finally that none of these stages will do you any good without the grace of God.

<sup>278</sup> Walsh, *Cloud*, 233 note 374; Clark, "Liberty of Spirit," 74.



light in the early part of the twentieth century, Evelyn Underhill and Clare Kirchberger, argue that the work shares certain traits with Hilton's cautionary approach to mysticism. In *The Essentials of Mysticism*, Evelyn Underhill compared M.N.'s work with that of Hilton:

One would judge [M.N.], from the peeps which he gives us into his mind, closer in spirit to the sweet and homely teachings of Walter Hilton than to the school of advanced mysticism which produced, in the mid-fourteenth century, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, *the Epistle of Private Counsel*, and other amazing studies of the inner life. These books were written under the strong influence of Dionysius the Areopagite, whose *Mystical Theology*, under the title of *Dionise Hid Divinite*, was first translated into English by the mystic or mystics who produced them. But to the translator of the *Mirror* his author's drastic applications of the Dionysian paradoxes of indifference, passivity, and nescience as the path to knowledge teem with "hard sayings." His attitude towards them is that of reverential alarm: he fears their probable effect on the mind of the hasty reader. They seem, as he says in one place "fable or error or hard to understand" until one has read them several times. He is sure that their real meaning is unexceptional; but terribly afraid that they will be misunderstood.<sup>279</sup>

Underhill translated more of the prologue, which appears in the same chapter from her book, without knowing who the author of the original French text was. That would not be discovered until thirty-five years after Underhill wrote, when in 1946 Romana Guarnieri – editor of the Chantilly manuscript – made the connection between the *Mirouer* and Marguerite Porete. Underhill's linguistic analysis places M.N.'s translation at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century. With her comparison to Hilton's writings, Underhill notes how both act as advisors, writing as guides to difficult yet worthy aspirations for the life of the contemplative, and how both warn about the patience and study it required to master these tasks.

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<sup>279</sup> Underhill 346.

Clare Kirchberger took on the task of translating the entire English *Mirror* into modern English using the Oxford version (MS Bodleian 505) as her exemplar and concurred with many of Underhill's conclusions, including the connection of the work with Walter Hilton. Kirchberger writes in her introduction,

Perhaps he was one of the unknown fourteenth-century mystics who wrote as disciples of Rolle or Walter Hilton. His language is midland with some northern characteristics, and the book seems to have been written towards the end of the fourteenth century; for this, as well as for reasons of style and thought, he seems more akin to Hilton in prudence and balance, though the tone of his Prologue, and of the devotional outpouring which forms an epilogue, recall the abundant fervour and simple tenderness of the followers of Richard Rolle, the group of writers of whom William of Nassington is chief.<sup>280</sup>

Kirchberger was also the first to examine the possibility of Walter de Manny being the man who carried the *Mirouer* from France to England and the idea that M.N. might have been Michael Northburgh (whom she called Northbrook).<sup>281</sup> But she decided that "his character, occupation, and date of death (1361) render such an hypothesis unlikely, but not impossible."<sup>282</sup>

Another scholar who made the connection between M.N. and Hilton also saw the possibility that these writers were responding to Free Spiritism. J. P. H. Clark suggests that Walter Hilton's *Scale* was, at least in part, a response to the "liberty of the spirit" heresy that the *Mirror* had been linked to mainly because of

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<sup>280</sup> Kirchberger, xxxiv.

<sup>281</sup> Kirchberger, xxxiv-xxxv.

<sup>282</sup> Kirchberger, xxxv.

its support for antinomianism and autotheism.<sup>283</sup> Clark points out that several other of M.N.'s quotations and interpretations are similar to Hilton's use of them, specifically pointing to the second gloss in M.N.'s *Mirror* – which incidentally contains the bark and kernel reference mentioned earlier – to show the similarity between M.N. and Hilton's (and the *Cloud*-author's) philosophy in walking the thin line between “perfect” and “imperfect humility.”<sup>284</sup>

Hilton says that awareness of God's prevenient action in the life of grace confers a ‘perfect humility’ which the soul could never acquire by its own efforts. Both he (*Scale* 2, 37.) and the *Cloud* (ch. 13) compare imperfect humility which is self-regarding, based on the sense of our own sinfulness, with perfect humility, based on the sense of God's greatness and love. The *Cloud* says explicitly what Hilton assumes — that ‘perfect humility’ presupposes the habit of ‘imperfect humility’; we can never cease to regard ourselves as sinners, and to practise mortification, although as Hilton says, a point may be reached where the assurance of one's salvation is no longer seen as a problem.<sup>285</sup>

This second gloss by M.N. is in response to the statement, “Perfore I seie: Uertues, I take leue of you for euermore,” a line that is thought to be one of the

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<sup>283</sup> “Walter Hilton and ‘Liberty of Spirit’” *Downside Review*, Volume 96, No. 322 pg. 61-78.

<sup>284</sup> “First whanne a soule *ghiueth* hir to perfeccion sche laboreþ bisili day and night, to gete vertues bi counsel of reson, and stryueþ wiþ vices at euery þought, at euery word and dede that sche perceyueþ comeþ of hem.... But so longe oon may bite on þe bitter bark of þe note, þat at þe laste he schal come to þe swete kernel. Right so ... þese soules þat ben ycome to pesiblete ... haue so longe stryuen wiþ vices and wrought bi uertues, þat þei be come to þe note kernel, þat is to seie, to þe loue of God which is swetnesse. And whanne þe soule haþ depeli taasted þis loue, so þat þis loue of God werkiþ ... in þe soule ... þane þis soule takeþ leue of uertues, as of þraldom and payneful trauel of hem ... and now sche is lady and souerayn, and þei be sogettis.” (Doiron 255; the edits in the text are the ones used by Clark in his article).

<sup>285</sup> Clark, “Liberty of Spirit,” 74.

reasons Marguerite Porete's book was condemned. Michael Sargent writes:

The passage repeated in the English version, that the soul may take leave of the virtues, is of course the basis of the first of the reported errors of the 'Mirouer', *Quod anima adnichilata dat licentiam virtutibus*, repeated in the sixth article of 'Ad nostrum qui': *Quod se in actibus exercere virtutum est hominis imperfecti, et perfecta anima licetiat a se virtutes*.<sup>286</sup>

The fact that both Hilton and the *Cloud*-author also addressed this issue of being so humble as to achieve mastery over the virtues, as Clark points out above, may indicate that, if they were not responding to Free Spiritism, they were at least aware of a trend in that direction in England.

Whether Hilton, M.N., and the rest of the Yorkshire circle are specifically addressing Free Spiritism or not, I argue that each of them is responding to the problem of an illiterate or under-educated audience that is attempting to bypass the work of contemplation in order to arrive at a pain-free oneness with God that allows for any behavior.<sup>287</sup> The tough bark refers to the struggles that all must go through in order to achieve the life of contemplation, and represents an attempt by

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<sup>286</sup> Sargent, "English Mystical Tradition," 447-448.

<sup>287</sup> While we cannot assume the number of readers who would have wanted works of contemplation, there is a great deal of evidence about the readership in whom is being addressed. Felicity Riddy writes, "The Vernon manuscript seems to provide substantial evidence for the existence of a certain kind of female readership, for which the Prioress [of the *Canterbury Tales*] can be said to function as a metonym." Riddy also discusses the possibility of women encouraging men to write for them and cites the case of the women for whom Rolle wrote convincing him to write in English: "It is women who in a sense socialise Rolle into writing his vernacular epistles, whose spirituality obliges the elusive and eccentric solitary to discover his own capacity for teaching in English on the contemplative life." See Felicity Riddy, "'Women talking about the things of God': a late medieval subculture," *Women & Literature in Britain 1150-1500*, ed. by Carol M. Meale, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 106-107.

these authors to slow their students down so that they do not risk falling into error and heresy by presuming that they know the will of God in their inexperience.

Clark points out that both Hilton and M.N. quote from Psalm 45:11, “Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus” to describe the “proper receptivity and passivity of the contemplative.”<sup>288</sup> Both authors use this image to invoke the idea of humility more strongly, to make good works and deep contemplation something that comes from God, not from the self, which again indicates a rising problem among the under-educated contemplatives who seek to advance beyond their own strength and thus risk falling into heresy.

The last connection that Clark makes between the Yorkshire writers and M.N. that supports my argument that they are working against the same troubles – regardless of the specific heresy – is that they discuss the impossibility of remaining in union with God all the time even as a contemplative.<sup>289</sup> Hilton emphasizes this point at the end of the second book of the *Scale*, while M.N.’s first gloss warns against the idea that, as Clark says, “there can be no unbroken condition of contemplation on earth; the reader is encouraged to hope for a progress within this fluctuation, in which the habit of awareness of grace becomes gradually more constant.”<sup>290</sup> This is an important issue for all of the Yorkshire writers: While M.N. and Hilton assure the orthodox readers that unity with God is

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<sup>288</sup> Clark, “Liberty of Spirit,” 71-72; *Scale* 2, 36; Doiron 305.

<sup>289</sup> *Scale* 2, 40; Hodgson, *Cloud*, 95-96; Doiron 251.

<sup>290</sup> Clark, “Liberty,” 77.

brief and therefore not something that can be used as an excuse for dangerous behavior on the part of the contemplative, the *Chastising*-author writes at the beginning of his work to discuss the difficult feelings that can follow union with God, and why he withdraws from the contemplative (like a mother playing peekaboo with a child) or like the *Cloud*-author's description of the boat lost at sea.<sup>291</sup>

The *Cloud*-author reminds his readers that one achieves unity with God, not through one's own desire and labor, but through the grace provided by God to whomever He wishes. Chapter 71 of the *Cloud* begins:

Somme þis mater so harde & so feerdful þat þei sey it may not be comen to wiþouten moche stronge trauayle comyng before, ne conceiuid bot seeldom, & þat in þe tyme of rauischung. & To þese men wol I answeere as febely as I kan, & sey þat it is alle at þe ordynaunce & þe disposicion of God, after þeire abilnes in soule þat þis grace of contemplacion & of goostly worching is gouen to.<sup>292</sup>

The next three chapters explain that one must not expect anyone else's experience with the ineffable to be similar to their own, or that they could even talk about it in a manner that would make sense to another person. He explains that there are those with exceptional grace who can carry on the life of contemplation even in their daily lives. He writes about the various people of the Bible, how Moses and

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<sup>291</sup> “Also whanne oure lord suffrith us to be tempted in oure bigynnyng, he pleieþ with hir child, whiche sumtyme fleeth awei and hideþ hir, and suffreþ þe child to wepe and crie and besili to seke hir wiþ sobbyng and wepyng. But þanne comeþ þe modir sodeinli wiþ mery chier and laughyng, biclippyng hir child and kysyng, and wipeþ awei þe teeris” *Chastising* 98; Hodgson, *Cloud*, 96.

<sup>292</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 70.

Aaron, though brothers, have a completely different experience of God. But in the final chapter of the book, he adds,

I say not þat it schal euer laste & dwelle in alle þeire myndes contynowely þat ben clepid to worche in þis werk. Nay, so is it nought. For from a yong goostly prentys in þis werk þe actueel felyng þerof is oftymes wiþdrawen for diuers skyles; somtyme for he schal not take ouer-homely þerapon & wene þat it be in grete party in his owne power, to haue it when him list & as him list.<sup>293</sup>

He ends the book quoting Gregory the Great saying that, “ ‘alle holy desires growen bi delaies; & yif þei wany[n] bi delaies, þen were þei neuer holy desires.’ ”<sup>294</sup> Walsh speculates that this last chapter (as well as the prologue to the book which expands its audience beyond that of the original addressee) is an afterthought, or perhaps an addendum that indicates that the book was originally meant for a specific student, but was then made acceptable for a larger audience.<sup>295</sup>

The images used by M.N., then, to direct his audience in the difficult task of understanding Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror* may well have been assembled from the textual community that existed at the end of the fourteenth century, a community that developed with the purpose of educating more poorly educated readers and listeners in contemplation.

## 2. The Valenciennes Manuscript

Genevieve Hasenohr’s 1999 discovery of a manuscript containing two

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<sup>293</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 73.

<sup>294</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 74.

<sup>295</sup> Walsh, *Cloud*, 264 note 468.

chapters of Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer* bound within a French translation of Hugh of St. Victor's *De arrha animae* (Valenciennes 239) suggests two things about her book immediately relevant to the understanding of M.N.'s translation. The first is that it was written in an older French than the Chantilly manuscript (Musée Condé MS F xiv 26) – which up until this discovery was the only French version of the *Mirouer* extant. This offers indications as to how later editors may have altered this book in the centuries after Marguerite Porete's death in 1310. The second is that it suggests the context of the other works that might have circulated with Marguerite's book. Just as the Amherst manuscript (British Library MS Additional 37790) shows us something about the other English texts that were read with M.N.'s translation of the *Mirror*, the Valenciennes manuscript suggests in what context readers on the Continent may have continued to read Marguerite's book even after its condemnation.<sup>296</sup> I will begin with the second point.

Hasenohr gives a brief rundown of the works contained in the manuscript.<sup>297</sup> The major works in the manuscript are Jean Gerson's *Mountains of Contemplation* and *Spiritual Mendicancy*, works written for Gerson's sisters – again texts aimed at helping the Latin-illiterate with contemplation.<sup>298</sup> Gerson had

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<sup>296</sup> See discussions of the Amherst manuscript below.

<sup>297</sup> Hasenohr 1352-1356.

<sup>298</sup> Jean Gerson (1363-1429) was a mystical theologian – he studied and wrote about the works of Richard of St. Victor and Pseudo-Dionysius, among others – who became the Chancellor of the University of Paris after 1395. Brian Patrick McGuire writes of the *Mountains of Contemplation*: “It is significant that



written against Marguerite Porete's work in 1401 (in *De distinctione verarum visionum a falsis*, though he calls her Marie of Valenciennes).<sup>299</sup> This suggests that a book containing two chapters of a book condemned as heretical might have circulated among the laity or religious women on the Continent, and may lead to an understanding of why the work was circulating at all in England. Marguerite Porete's name and the name of the condemned book are not attached to these chapters – as a matter of fact the running-heads on the pages in question indicate that this is just more of Hugh of St. Victor's *De arrha animae*, a twelfth-century work of contemplation with no controversial material. Hasenohr concludes that it is possible that these chapters were somehow entangled with the *De arrha animae* in the first few decades of the fourteenth century – judging by the language of the text – and compiled in manuscripts, which were made for the laity, like Valenciennes 239. The lay readership may explain the broader interest in the *Mirouer*. Circulation among the laity may also explain why there are not more copies, as books with a circulation outside the cloister would more likely be lost to wear when compared with those that remained within the cloister.<sup>300</sup>

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Gerson's first full statement on the mystical life was written in the vernacular and intended for women. He responded to what he felt was a need to convey learning in a digestible form to a new audience that had grown up in the previous century: women with some education who wanted to share the Christian life not only in practice but also in terms of its theoretical background" (Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson: Early Works*, [New York, Paulist Press, 1998], 24).

<sup>299</sup> *Gerson* 356-357.

<sup>300</sup> Hasenohr concludes her 1999 paper announcing her find by writing: "To conclude: during the decades immediately following the condemnation of the *Mirror of Simple Souls*, in the northern half of France, clerics unhesitatingly

Among the other texts in the Valenciennes manuscript are several that also made their way into England. These texts, originally Latin, have been translated into French which would make them accessible, or at least readable, by a non-clerical readership. Two of the works relevant to this study are the *Stimulus Amoris* (discussed in Chapter 2), and Guigo II's *Scala Claustralium* (discussed above in this chapter). Both of these works were popular enough to be translated into English and it could be that a complete edition of Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer* traveled in similar company when it came across the Channel to England. Both of these works were also written (or in the case of the *Scala* re-written) for a female audience, making it possible that this compilation may also have been made for a group of women, perhaps nuns.<sup>301</sup>

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associated parts of Marguerite Porete's teachings with those of the greatest and most trusted twelfth-century spiritual writers — [and the clerics did this] not in speculative treatises, but in vernacular compilations intended to be read by (or to) everyone, in order to guide the spiritual path of "simple people," as Gerson puts it. Whereas in England, Germany, and Italy the manuscripts seems to have circulated in men's monasteries — especially Carthusian and Benedictine — in France the text may thus have continued to circulate among layfolk, as it was intended to do. At the same time, this would explain why it left few to no traces before the 1520s or 1530s when printing gave it a certain amount of publicity because of the verbal attack on it by the Celestine monk from Our Lady at Ambert — half a century later and consequently in a different religious context. However, despite appearances [of the Mirror's having been little-known], when a religious lifestyle manual from the second half of the fifteenth century, explicitly addressing "simple people, not clerics," contrasted "the behavior of perfect people" with that of "merchants" (plagiarizing the *Mirror of Simple Souls*), didn't this indicate that Marguerite Porete's spiritual categories — or at least the most eloquent and vivid of them — had, in fact, become as familiar as those of Gregory [the Great] or Bernard [of Clairvaux]?" (Hasenohr 1360).

<sup>301</sup> The original letter that constitutes the *Scala* was addressed to a Brother Gervase who is unknown to us.

In the description of the French translation of *De arrha animae* in the Valenciennes manuscript, Genevieve Hasenohr explains that there are an additional four chapters, which contain two chapters that are clearly from the *Mirouer*. There is also a reconstitution of Chapter 118 of the Chantilly *Mirouer*, the chapter in which Marguerite Porete describes explicitly each stage toward the surrender of the will and a connection with God, which is not as identifiable as the other two chapters are.<sup>302</sup> Many of the works in the Valenciennes manuscript have been altered or edited, and several works have been recombined, but the excerpts from the *Mirouer* seem to be a strange addition to the *De arrha animae*. While Hugh of St. Victor's work is considered by most to be an argument for the necessity of the soul's recognition of the world, an acceptance of all the gifts God has given, the *Mirouer's* chapter speaks of surrendering of the will and abandoning all attachments of the physical world. The hero of *De arrha animae* is called "Homo," or "Man," and he uses reason to lecture "His Soul," while it is Reason who has presented the roadblock to the Soul's progress toward union with God in the *Mirouer*. So this seems to be a strange conjoining of the two works in the French manuscript.

*De arrha animae*, like the *Mirouer*, is a dialogue, but in this case it is a discussion between a Man and his Soul. God does not participate in the conversation, but is an object of inquiry for both characters. The Soul is in

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<sup>302</sup> Hasenohr 1355.

despair because she has found nothing to love in this world.<sup>303</sup> Since everything is transitory, and, as the Soul says, she can only love what she can see, there is nothing to place all of her love and attention on. The Man argues in return that though we cannot see God, we can see the enormous bride-gift (*arrha*) with which he has confirmed his love for us. The Man points to the gifts of the universe, to wisdom and understanding, and to our very lives. But the Soul is still not convinced because these are gifts that all receive — good and bad — and so how does she know that God loves her, in particular. The Man then divides the gifts of God into three types: the gifts that all share, the gifts that some share, and the gifts that are meant for just the Soul. The Soul is finally convinced as each question is answered by the Man's reasoning, and in the end, the Man makes a point of saying that the journey produced by all of these questions is certainly acceptable in the eyes of God, because it makes us see for ourselves how good He is.

The journey of the Soul in *De arrha animae* is nearly the diametrical opposite of the journey Marguerite Porete's Soul describes. For her Soul, the seven stages lead away from gifts of this world and move toward a place where the Soul cares for nothing at all. She has no will with which to desire anything at all, good or bad. The first four stages lead her away from concerns of being in a community and following the rules of the Church (the gifts that all can share); the next two have her surrender even the life of contemplation (a life that a select

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<sup>303</sup> The Latin "*anima*" is grammatically feminine. In the *Mirouer*, all three characters – Soul, Love, and Reason are presented as female characters.

group might cherish) and in the end she completely surrenders her will to God (the gift that she alone is given). Reason is the villain of her book, always asking questions that distract the Soul from her connection with God, while in *De arrha animae* the Man's reason is what leads him to rejoice in the Soul's questions. The Man encourages the Soul in her questioning, and explains

My Soul, if you are so determined in this inquiry and cannot be satisfied unless you straightway recognize the singularly valuable gift of your espoused, I gladly accede to your request. For I feel certain that your insistence stems more from devotion than from any importunate desire.<sup>304</sup>

While these two works do share the theme of God as lover and espoused, Marguerite describes Love as something with which she is already united, while Hugh of St. Victor describes the Soul in a state of preparation for the wedding night. Though M.N. in his translation tries to temper Marguerite Porete's discussion about being one with God by claiming that it is something the Soul could only feel on occasion, she is not discussing an event that lies in the future, perhaps after death. She describes a current union that leads to a constant ecstasy. Hugh of St. Victor compares the marriage of the Soul with God as something that is to come. He tells the story of King Assuerus from the Book of Esther and his search among the virgins of his wide country for a suitable mate, and likens the life of the Soul to the wait and preparation required before Queen Esther could be found.<sup>305</sup> The Man explains that like King Assuerus, God gives the Soul

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<sup>304</sup> Kevin Herbert (trans.), *Soliloquy on the Earnest Money of the Soul*, (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1956), 22.

<sup>305</sup> Herbert notes that King Assuerus is often a type for Christ (Herbert 28 note 14). In Chapter 51 of the Chantilly version of the *Mirror*, Love calls the Soul "O

everything that is needed to prepare to come before him and be raised to royal status. The Man also uses this metaphor to show how the gifts of the world are divided up again: while the call went out to all the virgins of the kingdom, only a small percentage of those were chosen to be seen by the king, and from those only one, Esther, was chosen to be the new queen. Marguerite Porete parallels this progression in her stages of attainment to God in the *Mirouer* in that only certain people can reach the contemplative life and from those only a very select few “noble souls” can attain unity with God in this lifetime.<sup>306</sup> So while Marguerite Porete’s *Mirouer* describes the wedding of the Soul and Love as already having happened, Hugh of St. Victor’s treatise explains that this life is leading up to that moment. Marguerite Porete’s Soul states that her union is ongoing; the Man in *De*

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very precious Esther,” (“O tres precieuse Hester” – Guarnieri, *Mirouer*, 152), but the Middle English has to “swete precieuse beyng” (Doiron 293). If the English is indeed derived from an older version of the *Mirouer*, perhaps Chantilly was influenced by the *Mirouer* often being linked to *De arrha animae*.

<sup>306</sup> In Chapter 60 of the *Mirouer*, Love answers a question Reason has asked about how many deaths the Soul must go through before this book, the *Mirouer*, can be fully understood. Love tells Reason that one must die three deaths, the first is the “death of sin”: “Those who die thus are folk who live by the life of grace, and this is sufficient for them, that they keep themselves from doing what God prohibits, and that they be able to do what God commands” (Babinsky 137). For the purposes of the two chapters found in Valenciennes 239, these are the “encumbered ones.” The second death is the death of the soul’s will, which belongs to “the most noble ones.” In Chapter 54, where Reason first raised the question, Love tells us “But the third death, by which this Soul died, no one living grasps except the one on the mountain.” When Reason asks who this is, Love says, “They have neither earthly shame nor honor, nor fear of anything which might come” (Babinsky 131). Since “the one” became “they,” Love is referring to those who have already become one with God and so are all one. Even though Marguerite Porete refers to the noble souls in the plural, she suggests that in their becoming one with God, they become singular and thus mirror the “one” of Hugh of St. Victor’s progression from the many to the few to the one.

*arrha animae* states that while union with God is not possible in this life, his betrothal-gift is all around us, and is the way we can know God in this life.

In the end, the two works assert that the goal is mystical union with God. Both works describe a program for how this may be achieved, but one looks inward to shed the outer world in order to surrender the will, while the other looks outward to reflect on the gifts of the Soul. However, both demonstrate that it can be a difficult accomplishment and only a select few can achieve this. Why these two are both included in the Valenciennes manuscript has yet to be determined. Perhaps it is as simple as the fact that they express the two “ways” of life — the one accepting of the world, *De arrha animae*, for the active life, while the one retreating from the world, Marguerite Porete’s *Mirouer*, for the contemplative life.

*De arrha animae* also stands in opposition to the other major texts from the Valenciennes manuscript in that it was not translated into English. While the book was popular and was owned by the nuns of Syon Abbey in its French form, for some reason the text was not translated in England. The question is why this book was translated into some vernacular languages (French, Flemish, Catalan, and German<sup>307</sup>), just as the *Stimulus Amoris* and the *Scala Claustralium* were, but not as they were into English. The *Mirouer*, the *Stimulus Amoris*, and the *Scala Claustralium* are all concerned with teaching a contemplative life, a removal from society (if only for a short time as in the *Stimulus*), but *De arrha animae* is more focused on enjoying the world around us as a gift from God. Rather than teaching

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<sup>307</sup> Herbert 11.

contemplation as a goal, Hugh of St. Victor promotes meditation, which, while it is one of the steps on Guigo's ladder, it is a lower form of contemplation and a study of the world around us. He promotes a more Scholastic approach of query and answer rather than the acceptance that the other works teach. This view of the outer world as a reflection of the gifts of God, something to be cherished rather than relinquished, something to be used rather than dismissed, may have been seen as unprofitable to anchoresses who were surrendering their connections with the world. Hugh of St. Victor's reasoning approach may have conflicted with the Yorkshire writers' advice against concerning oneself with a Latinate education.

Hasenohr notes that the Valenciennes edition of the *Mirouer* seems to be closer in some ways to the English translations, and in general that does seem to be true.<sup>308</sup> But in a close comparison of the Chantilly, Valenciennes, and English manuscripts, there are some key discrepancies that could reveal some striking things about the English translator.

The difficulty in making any judgments about these three works – the English *Mirror*, the Chantilly *Mirouer*, and the Valenciennes *Mirouer* – is that we

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<sup>308</sup> Hasenohr writes: The [Middle] English translation was made from a version in Old French; in cases where there is a significant textual difference between the Valenciennes reading and those of the Latin manuscripts, the English always follows the Valenciennes reading. The Italian translation, on the other hand, directly derives from the Latin version. The upshot of all this is that, as long as we lack a complete copy of the original version in Old French, the Latin translation is the version that will give us the most accurate picture of Marguerite Porete's thinking and also of her writing, whose phrasing and whose repeated expressions are mostly closely followed by the Latin. Therefore we should refer to the Latin, or, failing that, the [Middle] English tradition" (Hasenohr 1359-60).



still do not completely understand their order or how they relate to each other. Since Marguerite undertook to clarify her own work by adding chapters after the book was condemned by Gui de Colmieu, the Bishop of Cambrai sometime between 1296 and 1306, it is possible that there were several editions of the work from Marguerite's own hand.<sup>309</sup> We know that several copies of the book were burned by the bishop and that he ordered others to be destroyed, but it is not clear that the bishop knew how many copies were in current circulation. There are three approbations that accompany the English and Latin editions of the book that indicate that at least three theologians of the time had copies of the book, but there is no way to know whether these approbations were the product of three separate copies or one making the rounds.<sup>310</sup> We do know that the Latin translations were made from at least two separate editions, and M.N. speaks of an inferior copy of

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<sup>309</sup> Lerner suggests that there must have been at least four or five copies of the book made before 1308 ("New Light" 108). Also it appears that Marguerite Porete added several chapters after an initial explicit at the end of chapter 122 in the Chantilly manuscript, which might indicate that Marguerite Porete might have continued to add to her *Mirouer* in other drafts of the work.

<sup>310</sup> In the author's prologue, which immediately follows M.N.'s prologue, and is labeled as section I and part of section II (up to the incipit), the *Mirror* lists three men who have read the book and somewhat cautiously praised the book. The first is "frere menour of greet name of liif of perfeccioun. Men clepide him frere Ion of Querayn" (Doiron 249), a man who remains unidentified, although Querayn is thought to be a reference to "Quaregnon, in Hainaut, approximately 10 km west of Mons" (see Sean Field, "The Master and Marguerite," *Journal of Medieval History* 35 [2009], 138, note 9). The second is "a monk of Cisteyns [...] that highte daun Frank, chauntour of þe abbey of Viliers" (Doiron 250). Field writes of him: "It seems more possible that some further reference to Dom Frank might one day emerge, since Villers was an important Cistercian house for which substantial records do survive" (Field 138 note 9). The last is an identifiable reader, Godfrey of Fontaines (d. circa 1309), who served as Regent Master of the University of Paris from 1285-1304.

the French text from which he first tried to make his translation.<sup>311</sup> It is unclear whether he was working from his own sense of correction when he fixed the “mistakes” of the text in the translation that has come down to us, or whether he imported a new edition of the book to make his corrections. Since the three English editions that remain are from M.N.’s second attempt at a translation, there is no way to judge how different his first source might have been. It is possible that Marguerite Porete’s several versions spawned distinct branches, and the fact that Valenciennes 239 is an anthology of texts makes it nearly impossible to judge how the compiler’s hand may have been responsible for the discrepancies between the Valenciennes manuscript and the others.

Nonetheless, a comparison of the three versions reveals, at least, a range of interesting perceptions of the work, and may help to identify certain crucial troublesome issues within the text.<sup>312</sup> Lerner’s argument that the Valenciennes fragment reveals a closer relationship between the fragment and the English versions than the relationship it shares with the Chantilly manuscript makes this comparison important. While an order to these manuscripts is still difficult to establish, the comparison reveals subtle changes between the Valenciennes fragment and the English translation, which I assert helps to explain why M.N. fits with the Yorkshire circle and their mode of translation aimed at a less-

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<sup>311</sup> “The Frensche booke þat I schal write aftir is yuel written and in summe places for defaute of wordis and silables þe reson is aweie” (Doiron 249).

<sup>312</sup> Guarnieri’s edition comes from: Romana Guarnieri (ed.), *Marguerite Porete: Le Mirouer des Simples Ames*, Corpus Christianorum LXIX, (Turnholti, Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1986).

educated audience than the “noble souls” Marguerite Porete might have originally intended. For the purposes of this comparison, three texts are employed: the three extant Middle English editions are nearly identical so Doiron’s edition of the Cambridge manuscript (310-312) is used; the Chantilly French, for which Guarnieri’s edition (212-222) is used, as another; and the Valenciennes, for which Hasenohr’s edition (1361-1363) is used, as a third.<sup>313</sup>

One of the main differences between the French and English manuscripts in general is the breakdown of the chapters. The English editions are broken into thirty chapters, while the Chantilly manuscript has one hundred thirty-nine. The Valenciennes manuscript seems to favor Chantilly in this breakdown, although not perfectly. The fragment begins somewhere after Chantilly’s Chapter 77 begins and ends just shy of the end of Chapter 78, but the break between the two falls in the same place as the Chantilly break between the chapters. As for the English, the Valenciennes fragment begins nearly at the end of Chapter VIII and ends less than a tenth of the way through Chapter IX.

The compilers of the two French versions also used different titles for the chapters: Valenciennes has “Comment nous devons sieuir nostre appiel,” as the title for the first piece, which provides a very different focus from the Chantilly, “Icy demande l'ame se Dieu a mis fin et terme aux dons de sa bonté.” The Soul’s question about God’s benevolence has been dropped from the chapter, which either indicates a different chaptering, or perhaps the addition of the question at a

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<sup>313</sup> For Guarnieri’s edition see Romana Guarnieri (ed.), *Marguerite Porete: Le Mirouer des Simples Ames*, Corpus Christianorum LXIX, (Turnholti, Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1986).

later date. The second chapter in Valenciennes, which does match the break for Chapter 78 in Chantilly, is much closer to the Chantilly title: “Comment nous demorons encombrés de nous meismes” in Valenciennes, and “Comment ceulx qui n’ont obey aux enseignemens de perfection demourent encombrez d’eulx mesmes jusques a la mort.” While Valenciennes is simpler and uses the first-person plural, linking the auctorial voice with the reader/listener in a more humbling manner, Chantilly employs the third-person plural, putting a detached, observational distance between the author/narrator and the reader/listener. While it is possible that the titles in both cases were added, there is a shift of emphasis between the two, creating a different aim for the chapters: the Valenciennes title is more inclusive, while the Chantilly is more didactic.

The other indication we have of titles for these chapters comes in the Oxford version of the English — the British Library and Cambridge editions have no titles for any of the sections — which includes small cut-out pieces of parchment attached in various places throughout the text that contain short summaries of the nearby text. They appear to have been placed there by the scribe of the manuscript. The first title Oxford uses relevant to the Valenciennes fragment is, “How they that will come to peace and freedom must ever be ready and able to receive the sending of grace; and what it is to them if they refuse it.”<sup>314</sup> The second summary piece associated with the Valenciennes fragment comes right at the English manuscript’s break for Chapter IX approximately

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<sup>314</sup> The scans of the manuscript provided by Oxford are unclear and so I rely upon Kirchberger’s translation, which she used as chapter titles. See Kirchberger xii-xiii.

halfway through what Valenciennes determines as the first chapter (which corresponds with Chantilly's 77th Chapter), and reads: "A great rebuke that love giveth to them that refuse the sending of God, and how they be therefore encumbered of themselves all their lifetime, and how they might have been unencumbered, and by what means and for how little." These chapter headings are important because, while they may have nothing to do with Marguerite Porete's original intent for the material, they demonstrate the focus for those who created the manuscripts and perhaps give insight as to what the creators of the manuscripts understood the section to mean. In this case, the person who added the summaries to the Oxford manuscript seems to favor the more distanced tone of the Chantilly manuscript, over the more humble tone of the Valenciennes. Whereas the Valenciennes title implies inclusion among those who have not listened to God's messengers, the Oxford and Chantilly titles imply a more didactic approach to those who have failed to heed the word of God.

In the beginning of the Valenciennes fragment it is unclear which of the three characters is speaking. Marguerite's book is a dialogue among many beings, but primarily among Love, Reason, and the Soul. The Chantilly and English manuscripts are usually precise about who is speaking. Chantilly marks the speaker as the script for a play would, with the names of the characters (Amours, Ame, and Raison). The Middle English is always careful to add a "seip þis soule" or "seip Loue." At the beginning of the section corresponding to the Valenciennes fragment, Chantilly and the Middle English are in agreement that it is the Soul speaking ("dit ceste Ame" and "seip þis soule" respectively), but

Valenciennes begins with a vocative (“O mon ame”), as if it must be one of the other characters speaking.<sup>315</sup> And though the speaker refers to Amours seemingly in the third person, the character speaking identifies itself as the one who has sent the messages of Love. They are described as “lettres seellees *de moi* qui sui leur signeur,” (1B) which the English renders “bi lettres encelid of his signet” (1A) and Chantilly confirms are “lectres scellees de leur seigneur” (1C).

Identifying the speaker is of utmost importance, as this passage goes on to condemn those who spend their lives studying and do none of the works urged by the spirit.<sup>316</sup> If Love, who is a stand-in for God – and identifies herself that way in the Valenciennes (as both the sender of the messages and the one who is their lord) – is the speaker, then this seeming indictment of those who merely contemplate or who argue about the meaning of the law is severe. If it is something the Soul is saying, as in both the English and the Chantilly versions, then it might be dismissed as nothing more than an argument for the importance of the life of the actives. In this passage, God (Love) is offering any who would heed the “inner messages” the angels bring the chance to become united with her, which would have serious implications for the Yorkshire writers, who wrote so frequently about the dangers of the arrogant student attempting to bypass the

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<sup>315</sup> Appendix A contains the relative sections of the three manuscripts in a side-by-side format so that they may be compared more easily. See 1B in the appendix for this quotation. The numbers where each quote may be found in the appendix follows the quotation.

<sup>316</sup> “S’il se travilloient chascun jour avoec eux d’acomplir le perfexion des aposteles par estude de volenté, ne seront il mes desconbrés d’eux meismes. Nuls ne s’i atenge.” (Hasenohr 1363).

interpretations of the Church described in Chapter 3.

The English addition of the “signet” in this last phrase is also interesting in light of the possible connections with Walter Hilton. In Chapter 43 of *Scale 2*, Hilton, in discussing those who might understand the scriptures, explains “The priveté of Holi Writ is closid undir keie seelid with a signet of Jhesuis fyngir, that is the Holi Goost; and forthi, withouten His love and His leve mai no man come in.” (*Scale 2*, ll. 3338-3339). Not only does this create a further connection between M.N. and Hilton, but the usage of the word “signet” makes the reference more directly about those who ignore the words of Jesus Christ, a definitively “outward message” in the keeping of the Church.

There is also a question as to whom this passage is addressed. As mentioned above, the Valenciennes manuscript fragment begins with the vocative “O mon ame,” but it also identifies its audience as “tous ceux qui ne sont mie en perfexion de vie” (1B), presumably everyone, except perhaps the noble souls like Marguerite Porete’s Soul who have already surpassed this state of being. Chantilly seems to be more specific in referring to those who are not “en estant,” (1C) which is translated in Marler and Grant’s version as “state of being,” but in Babinsky as “in being.”<sup>317</sup> The English, on the other hand is a little more troubling: “not for hem þat ben in sittynge [...]” (1A) which could mean “not for those who are suitable,” possibly referring to those who have already proved the nobility of their souls, and so moved beyond the need to hear this explanation.

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<sup>317</sup> Marler and Grant 99; Babinsky 151.

The English continues: “but for he þat ne ben, þat (y)it schulen be” (1A) and the Chantilly concurs: “mais pour ceulx qui ne le sont, qui encores le seront” (1C), which seems to offer some hope to those who have not yet found their spiritual perfection. The English and the Chantilly specify then that this message is specifically for those with the potential to be in a higher state, but who have missed their opportunity so far.

According to this passage in all three versions, the Virtues carry the message of the will of Love as do the angels of the third hierarchy – “ensi come font li angele de le tierce gerarchie” in Valenciennes (1B); “ainsi comme font le Anges de la tierce jerarchie,” in Chantilly (1C); “right so as don þe aungels of þe þridde ierarchie” in the English (1A). Marguerite Porete follows the Pseudo-Dionysian framework of the *Celestial Hierarchy* in her book, grouping the angels into three hierarchies, but there are two points that do not match up with Pseudo-Dionysius’s ordering of the heavens.<sup>318</sup> To understand her use, the reader has to have some familiarity with Bonaventure’s *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (Book II, Distinction IX, Article Sole, Question 1), which claims that Gregory the Great and Bernard of Clairvaux place the Virtues among the third

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<sup>318</sup> See Luibheid 160ff. Pseudo-Dionysius explains in the *Celestial Hierarchy* that there are three groups of angels – the first of which is comprised of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones. The *Mirouer* places these angels in the third hierarchy. In this first passage, Marguerite Porete also refers to the Virtues, which are not a group of angels in Pseudo-Dionysius’s configuration (1A, 1B, and 1C).



hierarchy of the angels with the Archangels and Angels.<sup>319</sup> It is in Bonaventure's description that the Virtues are the ones who dispense God's miracles and signs.<sup>320</sup>

The role of the Thrones is addressed in each of the versions a little later – in the English, it is right at the beginning of Chapter IX (4A); in the two French manuscripts it follows in the same chapter (4B and 4C). The Thrones were sent to “answere you and to araie you” (4A) in the English, to “toy reprendre et ordonner” (4B) or “vous reprendre et aorner” (4C) in the French. But Love continues with the rest of the complement of the first hierarchy, saying that she sent the Cherubim to illuminate (“enlumyne” or “enluminer”) and the Seraphim, in the French to inflame (“embraser”), but in the English to shield (or perhaps incite) (“enbrace”). The English text adds that the Seraphim were sent to embrace us as well, but seemingly in a protective way (“biclippe”). But why did Marguerite Porete switch the order of the angels, calling this group the third hierarchy?

Marler and Grant note that Marguerite Porete seems to have confused the

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<sup>319</sup> Bonaventure was very popular among the Yorkshire circle as can be seen by the translation of two pseudo-Bonaventuran works discussed in this dissertation (*Stimulus Amoris* and *Meditationes Vitae Christi*).

<sup>320</sup> “Virtutes vocantur illi, per quos signa et miracula frequenter fiunt. (Those are called ‘Virtues,’ through whom signs and miracles are frequently wrought.)” See The Franciscan Archive (trans.), *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* (*St. Bonaventure’s Commentary on the Four Books of Sentences of Master Peter Lombard*), <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/sent.html>, Book II, Distinction IX, Chapter 1. In Pseudo-Dionysius’s *Celestial Hierarchy*, the angels of the third hierarchy would be the ones to bring information regarding their superiors to the human hierarchy.

order of the angels placing the Virtues in the third order, but they also note that she may be referring to 2 Corinthians 12 in which Paul refers to the “third heaven” as the highest – thus reversing the orders. Perhaps she is counting from an earthly perspective, and so this first hierarchy would be the third farthest away. But according to Pseudo-Dionysius, God communicates to us through the chain of command – the first hierarchy (the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones) would converse with the second hierarchy, and they with the third (the Principalities, Archangels and Angels), who in turn would communicate with the human hierarchies.<sup>321</sup> So why would God (or Love) communicate with us through this first hierarchy? It might be important to note that Isaiah and Francis were visited by seraphs (made distinct by the six wings).<sup>322</sup> Also, earlier in the *Mirouer* (Chapter 5), Marguerite Porete likens the Soul to a seraph. There is some discrepancy between the French in the Chantilly manuscript and the English here as well. In the Chantilly version, the wings of the seraph are used to fly, and cover the angel’s head and feet, but in the English, the wings cover the head and feet of Christ.

Bonaventure, in the commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, also

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<sup>321</sup> Luibheid 167.

<sup>322</sup> “Upon it stood the seraphims: the one had six wings, and the other had six wings: with two they covered his face, and with two they covered his feet, and with two they hew” (Isaiah 6:2). In Bonaventure’s *The Life of St. Francis*, the author describes the appearance of a Seraph that visits Francis: “On a certain morning about the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, while Francis was praying on the mountainside, he saw a Seraph with six fiery and shining wings descend from the height of heaven” (Ewert Cousin [trans.], *The Life of St. Francis*, [San Francisco, HarperCollins, 2005], 140).

addresses this question of which band of angels would address mortal issues. In Book II, Distinction X, Question 2, Bonaventure states that the words of Dionysius the Areopagite seem to contradict the words of the Bible when he says that the angels of the higher orders have no “exterior office” and so do not deal directly with humans. Bonaventure claims that since Christ, who is clearly above the angels, became man and dealt directly with mortal beings, the angels would certainly not be above such a thing, but that the angels come for specific purposes. So while an archangel would be sent to deliver an external message to the Virgin Mother of God (Gabriel’s annunciation in Luke 1:26-27, for example), a seraph, an angel of the order closest to God, might have been sent to inflame Isaiah’s passions and words, or Francis’s stigmata.<sup>323</sup> They were not specifically sent as messengers, but rather to inspire those who carry the message of God to the people of God.

Marguerite Porete seems to be writing about the dichotomy between the inner and outer life when she mentions the work of the Virtues as “inward werkyng” or “par le deventrain” which “schulde haue lordschip ouer þe body” or “qui doit avoir sour son corps signourie” (2). She writes of this “inwardness” again toward the end of the Valenciennes fragment when she states that those who do not “par le deventrain” (“bi her owen inwardnesse”) obey “le perfexion des vertus” (“perfeccion of uertues”) will be encumbered with themselves until death,

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<sup>323</sup> Bonaventure also describes how the seraph, now in the appearance of Christ on the cross – though still bearing the wings of the seraph – imprinted Francis with the markings of the nails and the spear wound to his side in the manner of Christ’s wounds. (*Life of St. Francis* 141).

even if they “se travilloient chascun jour avoec eux d’accomplir le perfexion des apostles par estude de volenté” (“fulfille þe perfeccion of þe apostles be studie of reson & of good wille”), they will be encumbered with themselves until death. While the English is very close to the Valenciennes French, here M.N. adds the “neþir of body ne of soule” as if to emphasize the connection between the two (12). Marguerite Porete makes the distinction that the Virtues and these other angels speak to us through our soul, not as outward messengers. This might fit Bonaventure’s explanation of how humans could communicate with higher powers than the angels that are the next in line above mankind in the Great Chain of Being, even though the Chain permits communication between only the lowest level of angels and the highest rankings of humans, in other words, the clergy.<sup>324</sup>

The hierarchy of the angels employed by Marguerite Porete may also be important in clarifying her statements about saying farewell to the Virtues in Chapter 6 of the Chantilly manuscript. In the *Mirouer*, the Soul talks about the three deaths the Soul must undergo in order to achieve union with God. If the three hierarchies correspond to these three deaths the way the hierarchies correspond to each other, by ascending past that lowest hierarchy (or first, by her counting) the Soul is describing how she has passed the first death and is moving toward that highest hierarchy (the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones). Marguerite Porete describes at the beginning of the Valenciennes fragment how her instructions are for those who still have not heard the messages brought by the

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<sup>324</sup> Bonaventure explains how the three hierarchies of angels are mirrored in the hierarchy of humans in Book II of the *Commentaria*.

lower level of angels, and so those who have not yet surrendered to the first death.<sup>325</sup>

In Chapter 6 of the *Mirouer*, the Soul claims that the Virtues held her as a slave, that she did all the Virtues' bidding and suffered for them, and that is why the Soul was able to surpass them, or as Love states, the Soul is able to possess the Virtues as they once possessed her.<sup>326</sup> It seems clear from the chapters isolated in the Valenciennes fragment that the Soul – and therefore perhaps the author – does not repudiate the rules of the Virtues, an issue that is very important to M.N. On the contrary, she suggests that those who have failed to listen to the Virtues have failed to hear any of the messages sent by God and so are left encumbered of themselves, no matter how much work they do in studying the Scriptures. But the Virtues are “inward” or spiritual messengers, rather than bodily ones, and therefore require at least some experience with a life of contemplation.<sup>327</sup>

The description of the inner/outer dichotomy related in this discussion of

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<sup>325</sup> For a fuller description of the three deaths, see page 4 above.

<sup>326</sup> Babinsky 84.

<sup>327</sup> This is one of the most dangerous passages, if it is to be judged by M.N.'s need to gloss. M.N. responds with three of his fifteen glosses, including one of his longest glosses, and in each spells out that only when the Soul is united with God can she be considered to be above the Virtues or can ignore the commandments of the Church, and this can only come after subjecting herself to the rigors of both Virtues and commandments for a long time (Doiron 254-259). This may be an instance in which it can be seen that the English translator wanted to remind the reader that both “inward” and “outward” messengers must be heeded so as to avoid the dangers of Free Spiritism. In Chantilly, this section is made up of Chapters 6 through 9.

the angels in the passage from the Valenciennes fragment is also taken up by the *Cloud*-author in his *Epistle of Prayer*. He speaks to his addressee of being a messenger sent by God, but, unlike the angels of God, he is an external messenger. He writes:

For wite þou *right* wel þat ic he a þought þat stereþ þee to good, wheþer it come fro wiþinne bi þin aungel messenger or fro wiþouten by any man messenger, it is bot an instrument of grace, geuen, sent, & chosen of God himself for to worche wiþinne in þi soule.<sup>328</sup>

The Yorkshire circle, as we see in works like the *Cloud*, make it very clear that body and soul are one and that the soul cannot separate from the body to experiences and visions of God. M.N., by his own rush to clarify the Soul's relationship with the Virtues in his glosses described in note 326, indicates his own interest in maintaining the importance about both inward and outward messengers from God and when heeding each is appropriate. Like the *Cloud*-author in the passage above, he emphasizes the importance of both the inner messengers (the angels or Virtues) and the outward ones (the clergy and their interpretations of Scripture).

The English translation of the *Mirouer* states that the reward for having subjected oneself to these inner messengers, the Virtues, would be freedom for both body and soul, while both French versions separate the freeing of the body and soul – the messengers would have freed the body, but in the way an animal is unbridled (*deffranchir*), while the soul would have been freed the way a slave or serf is freed (6B). It's a subtle distinction, but one worth noting as it shows the

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<sup>328</sup> Hodgson, *Cloud*, 107.

adjustment to the text in translation to an attitude of unifying the internal and external so as to control unity between the soul and God in this lifetime. Whereas the *Mirouer* makes the distinction between the role of the body and soul, both Chantilly and the English remove that distinction. As we see in the *Cloud of Unknowing* there was a great deal of interest in asserting that the body and soul cannot be separated at this time, a concern since at least the time of Clement V who decreed that the soul could not operate without the body at the Council of Vienne in 1312.<sup>329</sup> But it is also a concern directly related to Free Spiritism. Lerner writes that Free Spirits, “hoped to quicken the life of the ‘interior’ rather than the ‘exterior’ man and while some went preaching, others were sedentary and might have been entirely passive.”<sup>330</sup> This injunction against letting the body be idle and claiming that the soul became one with God for any long period of time is also seen in the Ruusbroec’s third perversion of the life of the contemplative in which the contemplative sits and waits for God to move him for fear that he would interfere with God’s will.

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<sup>329</sup> Kerby-Fulton lists six of the articles of *Ad Nostrum* to which M.N. seems to defer in his glosses. The first and second articles are most relevant: 1) “that a man in this life can attain to such perfection that he is incapable of sinning or surpassing his present degree of grace;” and 2) “that he no longer needs to fast or pray because he has gained such control over the senses that he can allow them complete freedom.” M.N. warns over and over again that while one cannot be in ecstasy all of the time particularly in the glosses that surround the discussion about surpassing the Virtues. M.N. seems not to consider the Virtues to be in the hierarchy of angels or the messengers of God, but the virtues that are contrary to the vices. The *Cloud*-author emphasizes that the soul must be prepared to be separated from God most of the time. See the discussion of the *Cloud*-author in the second section of Chapter 3 of this dissertation (99-100)

<sup>330</sup> Lerner, *Heresy*, 240.

The notion of the unity of body and soul is discussed further toward the end of all three of the versions of the material covered in the Valenciennes fragment when Marguerite Porete writes about the healing of the soul, in possibly one of her only direct references to Christ. She says that the “sunne of *right*wisnesse ne helide neuere soule wiþoute þe body whanne he dide his myraclis in erþe...” [11A] (“car li vrais Solaux de justice ne sana onquez ame sans saner le corpz...” and “car le vray Soleil de Justice ne sana ne garit oncques ame sans garir le corps, quant il faisoit ses miracles en terre [11B and C]). The extraordinary message though lies in the earlier passage about the freedom of the body and soul. The English states, “if ye hadde, seiþ loue, obeied whanne I clepide you, bi þe willes of uertues þat I sente you, ye hadde had of *right* þe freedom þat I haue” (6A). Both French texts confirm this, but the Valenciennes is missing the “if” part of the clause and simply states “Tu eusses par droit la franchise que j’ay” (6B). In both cases, the reward for having subjected oneself to the Virtues was access to the freedoms (and presumably the knowledge and power) of God.

Marguerite Porete also writes about the distinction between the interior and the exterior when she describes how those who will not heed this inner message from the Virtues “se þe motes wiþinne þe sunne-beem” (11A) and not the light itself. Bonaventure discusses Dionysius’s use of light in his description of God in *The Divine Names* Chapter 4, 4 and how it can be understood that the divine rays of light are an image of the angelic powers in order to describe where



the creation of the angels began.<sup>331</sup> Dionysius describes how light falls on everyone with the same intensity, but that the eye must be readied for it, so the perception might not always be strong. Walter Hilton also uses the sunbeam metaphor in the *Scale of Perfection*.<sup>332</sup> In his case he writes about three men who stand out in the sunshine: the first is blind and does not know that the light shines on him except that he believes others when they tell him so; the second has his eyes closed and so the light is obstructed, but he can see it through his closed lids; and the third has his eyes open and so no longer needs faith. The connection here is in the second man who has his eyes closed: Hilton says specifically that the eyes represent “bodili kynde.”<sup>333</sup> Hilton also tells us that the three men signify the various lives: the first is the soul that is “reformed only in faith”; the second is a contemplative; and the third is a “fully blessed soul.”

Marguerite Porete’s use of the sunbeam metaphor serves many purposes then – it connects the idea of the perception of the divine light with the notion of the angels through Bonaventure, a powerful authority for the Yorkshire circle; it shows the importance of the readiness of the inwardness of the soul that is required to perceive what is already there; and it shows how those who respond to the “les busquettes” (Chantilly has “buchetes” and the English has “motes wiþinne”) are simply not heeding that inner light. She goes on to say: “Et quant

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<sup>331</sup> Bonaventure’s Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Distinction XIII, Article 1, Question 1.

<sup>332</sup> *Scale* 2, chapter 32.

<sup>333</sup> *Scale* 2, ll. 2196.

tel soleil est en l'ame, et tel raiz et tels resplendisseurs" (Chantilly has: "Et quant tels solaux est en l'ame et tel ray et tel resplendisseur" and the English has "And whanne þis sunne is in þe soule and þis beem and þis *brightnesse*"), rather than received externally (presumably from study or preaching), "le corps n'a plus foiblece ne l'ame crainte" (Chantilly has "li corps n'a mais foiblece ne li ame cremeur" and the English has "þe body haþ no more febleness, ne þe soule drede").<sup>334</sup>

In some ways, the English deemphasizes the importance of the inward mind versus that of both body and soul. The Valenciennes manuscript seems to underline that if one allows oneself to hear the inward callings of the Virtues, then there really need not be any external manifestation of God's work on the soul. An important change comes where Valenciennes has "Qui en soi se fie, foi le saintefie," but the English and Chantilly alter it to "But noon may come to þis, but if feiþ halowe him" and "qui en Dieu se fie, Dieu le sanctifie," respectively (12), taking faith away from being a strictly inward to something that comes externally. In both the English and Chantilly, God works as an external force and not directly through the soul – as the English puts it, the soul is something that "feiþ and loue gouernen." But the Valenciennes description makes this something to be granted through the Soul herself. Marguerite Porete calls upon those who hear the words within their souls, not from the mouth of the clergy. The translations deemphasizes this notion. Valenciennes does not include the last three lines of

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<sup>334</sup> For this series, see Appendix A-11.

the chapter as recorded by both the Chantilly and Middle English editions, in which Marguerite Porete asserts that anything done “wipouten the feruour of þe willynge of her inwardnesse” will do nothing but serve to encumber the soul that should be free, but that might be because of the compiler rather than a change made on the part of M.N.<sup>335</sup>

If Hasenohr is right and the English version is closer to the original, then it seems that the makers of the Chantilly version went beyond M.N.’s notion of simply glossing the difficult words to editing the writing to remove much that might be considered heretical. If, as Lerner and Hasenohr suggest, the Valenciennes fragment represents the original words of Marguerite Porete, then the English version might be closer to the original words of the *Mirouer* than is the Chantilly manuscript. But as I have shown here there are still a substantial number of changes made between these two versions, meaning that the English translation may not be nearly as dependable a mirror of Marguerite Porete’s *Mirouer* (at least as it appears in the Valenciennes fragment) as Robert Lerner has suggested.<sup>336</sup> The trouble, of course, is that the Valenciennes fragment is short, but it does suggest a couple of things about the relationship between the Chantilly and the English. It is clear that whichever came first, the English has altered fewer of the words of the original manuscript than Chantilly has, but it is was

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<sup>335</sup> Doiron 312.

<sup>336</sup> “Not only is ME [the Middle English translation] more pristine than C [the Chantilly manuscript], but C is a problematic witness to the true nature of Marguerite’s thought.” Lerner, “New Light,” 103.

certainly not translated word for word, or even sense for sense as M.N. promised in his prologue.<sup>337</sup> The question remains whether there are various editions of the book from Marguerite Porete's own hand. It could be that Marguerite herself altered the book after the condemnation of the Bishop of Cambrai, but there is no firm evidence as to who edited these texts.

### 3. Three English Manuscripts

The three manuscripts of the English translation of Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls* are each products of the fifteenth century, and though they are similar to each other overall and come from related sources, it seems that they are disparate enough to each have their own value for sources as a modern translation.<sup>338</sup> Marilyn Doiron states her belief that St. John's College Cambridge 71 manuscript "represents the original translation more accurately and reliably than do the other two[...]," while Clare Kirchberger chose Bodleian Library (MS 505) as her source because the subdivisions (noted in the previous chapter) of the long chapters, though likely not part of M.N.'s text, afford "a valuable indication of the general drift of the argument, and [elucidate] the unpunctuated chaos of the British Library MS."<sup>339</sup> British Library Additional 37790 manuscript gives us an insight into other works that were being read alongside the *Mirror*. Each version

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<sup>337</sup> Doiron 249.

<sup>338</sup> Doiron 245.

<sup>339</sup> Doiron 245; Kirchberger xxii.

remaining to us seems to have had a unique purpose and possibly a different audience, indicating a wider interest than the Carthusian ownership of all three manuscripts tends to demonstrate.

Both the Cambridge and Oxford editions contain inscriptions stating that the books belonged to the London Charterhouse at one time. The note that appears in the Oxford edition indicates that the book was given to the Charterhouse by an Edmund Storoure who served as prior there from 1469-1477.<sup>340</sup> The Oxford manuscript includes a version of the *Chastising of God's Children* and is annotated by a second and third hand in such a way that shows it was employed by a lector, while the *Mirror* is annotated by a fourth annotator, which may mean that the book was not read aloud or was read in a different venue from the *Chastising*.<sup>341</sup> The question is why a notable charterhouse would have a need for two copies of a work with at least dubious orthodoxy in a post-*Constitutions* era, let alone why a prior would find it a suitable gift for his fellow monks. Perhaps Edmund Storoure found that attaching the *Chastising* as an introduction to the *Mirror* would provide guidance for his fellows who were already interested in this work of contemplation.

The British Library version raises more questions about its reception as it was part of a miscellany of works on contemplation that includes works by Richard Rolle (Richard Misyn's 1430s translations of the *Emendatio Vitae* and the *Incendium Amoris*), the only extant copy of the short version of Julian of

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<sup>340</sup> Doiron 244-245.

<sup>341</sup> *Chastising* 3.

Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*, a translation of Jan van Ruysbroec's *Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God*, and various shorter texts, which include a selection from Bridget of Sweden's *Revelations*. This compilation of works of contemplation demonstrates an interest both in translation and in Continental works. Many of the works were either initially written for women or by women and most deal with contemplation in a way that suggests a less educated and Latin-illiterate audience. This is not to say that the manuscript was compiled for a lay audience, but rather that it was compiled for an audience who might be dealing with these kinds of works in a guidance capacity. The fact that this anthology focuses on the brand of contemplation represented by Rolle, Ruusbroec, and the *Mirror* — the type of “enthusiastic” and unlearned contemplation that concerned each of the four writers discussed in Chapter 3 — could either be an indication of the audience for which the compilation was made or it could be a work prepared for the those who would teach these works. Marleen Cré argues that, on the strength of the type of works chosen, it is unlikely that the Amherst manuscript was made for a lay or religious female audience. She writes:

Yet it is noteworthy that the texts usually associated with the Briggittine nuns, *The Orchard of Syon*, the *Myroure of our Ladye*, and Mechtilde of Hackeborn's *Book of Gostlye Grace*, though not for the spiritually faint-hearted, are less speculative than especially the later texts (Ruusbroec and Porète) found in Amherst. In addition to all this, it does not seem very likely that Amherst was originally intended for a lay or female religious audience outside the Charterhouse for several reasons. Even though the anthology does copy Misyn's dedication to a female reader, and includes Julian of Norwich's short text, one of the shorter compilations in the anthology, *De triplici genere amoris spiritualis/Tractatus de diligendo deo*, rewrites selected fragments from Rolle's *Ego dormio*, originally

written for a nun of Yedingham, and addressed to a mixed audience of men and women, for an exclusively male audience. This male audience is more likely to have been Carthusian than Brigittine, as the Syon brethren's life was oriented towards the public office of preaching rather than to contemplation.<sup>342</sup>

Perhaps, then, we see here a text created for those who would be the guides for the lay religious. Perhaps this compilation is made as a guide for teachers, which would explain the vernacularity of the text as well as the difficulty of the works chosen.

Marleen Cré identifies eight separate annotators to Add. 37790, all but one of whom has at least one comment in the text of the *Mirror*.<sup>343</sup> That one is James Grenehalgh, a Carthusian who started his career at the Sheen Charterhouse in 1499 and was prolific in his annotation — Cré states that he is responsible for the annotations in at least twelve other manuscripts. He is identified by his monogram in several places throughout the manuscript, and fills in some missing passages in the *Mirror*, but oddly provides no comments of his own.<sup>344</sup> Grenehalgh's marks within the *Mirror* reveal an interest in the important lists of the *Mirror*: first, the nine characteristics of annihilated souls that appears in what corresponds to chapter 11 of the Chantilly manuscript; and second, the list of the three deaths that appears in what corresponds to chapter 60 of the Chantilly. His others are

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<sup>342</sup> Marleen Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse: A Study of London, British Library, MS Additional 37790*, (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 33.

<sup>343</sup> Cré, *Mysticism*, 281-298.

<sup>344</sup> Cré, *Mysticism*, 292. Grenehalgh adds four comments to the *Fire of Love* (Misyn's translation of Rolle's *Incendium Amoris*) and two comments to Julian of Norwich's *Revelations*.

corrections, which could possibly indicate that he had access to another manuscript at some point.<sup>345</sup>

Though his notations in the manuscript come too late to indicate the original intention of the manuscript, his affiliation does suggest some interesting possibilities for his encounter with the manuscript. First, the Sheen Charterhouse was paired with Syon Abbey, a Bridgetine house created in 1415 by Henry V. Bridget of Sweden's order concentrated on the education of women, both in reading and writing, and the Carthusian monks at Sheen were largely responsible for creating texts for them to study.<sup>346</sup> While only the catalogue of books maintained by the brethren at Syon exists, the nuns' library, attested to in wills and inscriptions, was also extensive. It included the works of Hilton, the *Chastising*, Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, and many other devotional works.<sup>347</sup> Grenehalgh acted as a spiritual guide for a woman at Syon named Joanne Sewell, and while there is some indication that he was reprimanded and removed from Sheen because of this relationship, there are several works that he prepared for her, placing either his or her initials next to important passages of various works. Whether or not he had any intention of preparing the Amherst manuscript for her is unclear, but the presence of his

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<sup>345</sup> Cré, *Mysticism*, 338.

<sup>346</sup> In Vincent Gillespie's introduction to his *Syon Abbey*, he writes, "But the famous 15th-cent. Sheen/Syon textual nexus is remarkable mainly for the production of texts by the brethren of Sheen for the sisters of Syon: the voice of the Syon brethren is largely silent" (Gillespie, xxxiv).

<sup>347</sup> David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books & Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1995), 171-210.



commentary might indicate that the manuscript may have been meant for the Syon nuns.

Even though each of the remaining English manuscripts of the *Mirror* was produced in the era after the new condemnation of the beguine movement and of the *Mirror* itself at the Council of Basel, it seems as though the books were intended as teaching devices of one sort or another, whether within a collection of works, as in the British Museum manuscript, with just one work of guidance as in the Oxford manuscript, or by itself as in the Cambridge edition.

Some of the ideas and discrepancies expressed in both M.N.'s glosses and the changes he made within the text can be traced to older spiritual writers like Bonaventure and Augustine and it seems that M.N.'s purpose was to address some concerns about the text. Among those changes, there are considerable similarities with the concerns that the Yorkshire circle also addressed in their writings. The attempts to remove the idea of the separation of the soul and the body, and the external and internal messengers that might approach the contemplative, are mirrored in each of the Yorkshire works. M.N.'s chief concern is to contain the non-clerical student's "enthusiasm" and "imagination" and to encourage a more worldly approach to contemplation, as do all four of the Yorkshire writers discussed above. In the alterations that M.N. presumably made, judging by the Valenciennes text, there is an emphasis on reminders to the student of contemplation that only God's grace can allow the student to accomplish true contemplation and that it is best to follow a spiritual guide within the Church.

This evidence places M.N. within this circle of writers, and demonstrates concerns that parallel theirs, concerns that were not as prevalent, and which would not have been addressed in the vernacular, closer to the middle of the fourteenth century.

The appearance of the *Mirror* in the context of such Yorkshire works as the *Chastising* and translations of Rolle's works throughout the fifteenth century, and the fact that the Carthusian monks maintained their interest in the work as late as Richard Methley's tenure at Mount Grace and 1491 translation of the *Mirror* into Latin, demonstrate some interest in teaching the idea of deification to a Latin-illiterate audience coexisted with the trials of Lollards and other heretics throughout the fifteenth century. While it can be seen from M.N.'s care in his glosses and the fact that his message matches up so well with the other Yorkshire writers, it seems that there was also an interest in promulgating difficult theology like deification in a controlled environment, whether that be the cloister of contemplatives or a wider audience for which the Church wanted guidance.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION: THE *MIROUER* IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The Council of Constance (1414-1418) — the same council which condemned John Wyclif and elevated Bridget of Sweden to sainthood for the second time — ended the Great Western Schism in 1417 by electing Martin V as the one and only pope of the Roman Church. However, it also marked the furthering of conciliarism, the belief that the Roman Church should be ruled by a general council that had power over the pope. The struggle between Council and pope was taken up by Martin's successor, Eugenius IV, and its signature battle was the Council of Basel, which occupied the Continental Church for eighteen years (1431-1449).<sup>348</sup> In an effort to discredit Eugenius, a “Master of Arts and Medicine” by the name of James accused the pope of writing in favor of the *Mirouer*, an accusation that gained no traction because “no one knew that the *Mirror* had been written by a beguine.”<sup>349</sup>

Earlier in the century (1401) John Gerson had referred to the author of “a certain little book written by a woman with unbelievable cleverness,” and he called her “Marie of Valenciennes.”<sup>350</sup> This appears in his treatise *De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis* written to a Celestine monk named Brother

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<sup>348</sup> The Council of Basel is also known as the Council of Florence, as well as by several other city names because it was forced to move around frequently during the eighteen-year period.

<sup>349</sup> Lerner, *Heresy*, 169.

<sup>350</sup> Maguire 356.

Nicholas, arguing that passions and “intellectual pride” can often overrun devotion and cause people to surrender to false visions. He argues that “Marie” claimed that anyone who comes to divine love “is released from all precepts of the law” and suggests that those who think they love or if their love comes by vanity, error, or lust, “it will fashion for itself different illusions, so that a person thinks he sees or understands matters of which he is wholly ignorant.”<sup>351</sup>

Richard Methley (1450-1528), a Carthusian at the Mount Grace charterhouse in Yorkshire, translated M.N.’s Middle English version of Marguerite Porete’s *Mirror of Simple Souls*, completing his task in August of 1491. He was a man dedicated to the solitary life, and in one particular way brings this survey of Yorkshire writers full circle: much of his writing and his emotional mysticism comes from the writings of Richard Rolle. He writes often of the *calor*, *dulcor*, and *canor* in his writings, but always in a post-Arundelian fashion, warning against going too far.

Like Rolle and Hilton, he wrote in Latin and in English, and worked on translation, and like his fellow Yorkshiremen, his translations were for a specific person. Unlike them, however, he always wrote for men, and his translations were from the vernacular into Latin, rather than the other way around. One of his English letters is to a hermit named Hugh, and is a letter of guidance through the difficult formative years of a solitary. As a meditation, he uses a line from Psalm 142 (“Eripe me de inimicis meis Domine; ad te confugi; doce me facere

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<sup>351</sup> Maguire 356-357.

voluntatem tuam, quia Deus meus es tu”), which he translates: “Lord, delyver me fro myn enemys; to the I have fled; tech me for to do thy wyl, for thou art my God,” and explains it by saying that it is the cry of those who seek to escape from worldly love.<sup>352</sup> Like Rolle, Hilton, the *Cloud*-author, and the others described here, he was a spiritual guide who taught while still on the path himself, using his writing to help himself as well as to help the person addressed. Methley’s choice of works to translate seems similar to that of the Yorkshire writers already discussed: works that are simply written that express difficult concepts.

Methley connected the *Cloud of Unknowing* and M.N.’s version of the *Mirror* in his interest in the two works, which shows an understanding that the works reflect each other and his own humble escape from the desire of worldly things. But Methley also represents the sunset of interest in the *Mirouer* among the Latin-illiterate in England. Though versions of the book, chronicled in Hasenohr’s article, were created for female religious in Europe into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so far the *Mirouer* has not been discovered as the basis for any other English books beyond Methley’s translation. The fact that Methley returns the book to the cloister by translating it back into Latin might just mean that interest in the text of the *Mirouer* had simply waned by the end of the fifteenth century.

While the identity of M.N. remains unknown, understanding the period in which his translation of Marguerite Porete’s *Mirouer des Simples Ames* was

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<sup>352</sup> See Barry Windeatt (ed.), *English Mystics of the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 266.

written illuminates who his audience might have been and why they would want access to such a book. When his work is put into the context of the Yorkshire circle of writers who flourished at the end of the fourteenth century, it becomes clear that his prologue and glosses are aimed at an audience eager for the life of contemplation, but not yet ready to surrender all of its time to the study of such a life, whether this means active clergy members, female religious, or M.N.'s "comune peple." While the *Mirror* is certainly not an easy book to comprehend, its readers have a gentle voice, in the form of M.N.'s glosses, telling them that it is all right to not understand everything, that contemplation will come to those who are patient, even if they have no formal education in the mystical theology of the text. M.N.'s readers find a simple guide to the complex life of contemplation that could see them through the harsh passage of the end of a century that saw kings toppled and the Church in schism.

What M.N. might have known about the difficult history of the work or the death of its author is ultimately irrelevant. M.N. has seen to this by rendering the book, both by the addition of his glosses and by a careful editing process, safe for those who do not have the background or the time to understand the full implications of Porete's words. He must have recognized the dangerous passages, and understood that contemplation was not for everyone – surely, this is why he published the approbations as prologues to the work, warning that great theologians, while they had approved the work, had warned that the text was demanding and ought to be considered carefully. But M.N. also saw the value of this work as a text for achieving the life of contemplation.

As a sixteenth-century glosser, Stephen Batman (d. 1584) would write in the margins of Walter Hilton's translation of the *Stimulus Amoris*:

In mani places of this stimulus amoris, this pricke of love, are veraye good & sound documents of scripture, and what the rest are consider the tyme. He is no wise man y<sup>t</sup> for the haveng of spiders or any outhur noisome thinge in his howse will therefore set the whole howse on fier for by that meanes he disfornisheth himselfe of his howse: and so doe men by rashe borneng of ancient Recordes lose the knowledge of mucche learnenge/ there be meane and wayes to presarve the good corne by gathering oute the wedes.<sup>353</sup>

Though this was written more than a century and a half after M.N. translated the *Mirouer*, a similar mode of thought can be seen in M.N.'s preservation of the *Mirouer*'s fundamental teachings for those who looked for some form of communication with God in a difficult period, while mollifying some of the more difficult passages with his glosses. By examining M.N. in the context of the Yorkshire circle, this desire to preserve books of contemplation, despite their "spiders," comes through in his glosses.

It is also important to understand that books were of a much more fluid nature in this period than they are today. There were no concerns for copyright or preserving an author's voice. Nicholas Love recognized that not all of what was then considered to be Bonaventure's *Meditationes Vitae Christi* was of interest to his constituents and that his readers trusted him to cut out the parts that were not relevant to them – to keep with Batman's metaphor: served as an exterminator who rendered the house safe again. In light of Love's translation methods, M.N.'s own role is illuminated. Whether he knew who the *Mirouer*'s author was is as

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<sup>353</sup> Kane, *The Prickyng of Love*, v.

immaterial as Nicholas Love's assumption that a saint wrote the book he was translating. In both cases, it is the message of the books that was most important to the translators and their interest in promoting the works to English readers, not who the authors were or what the histories of the work might be.

The affinity M.N.'s *Mirror* has with the works of the Yorkshire circle emphasizes that though there was a concern for heresy – Lollard and, perhaps, Free Spirit – there was also a growing interest in devotion and contemplation that found its peak in the decades following Wyclif's dismissal from Oxford. The *Mirror* is not about visions or prophecy like several other texts that were being translated at the time, but instead offered a mode of communing with God without the doubt of feelings or rampant imagination. The *Mirror* does not concern itself with physical manifestations – the *calor*, *dulcor*, *canor* of Rolle – or visions that could have been sent by devils. Instead it writes about the practice of working one's way through the rules of the Church to the point where they are second nature and require no will on the part of the practitioner. M.N. ensures that even Ruusbroec's concern with the deviants of the contemplative life will not be an issue with his guidance. Along with works like the *Chastising of God's Children*, the *Mirror* promotes very deep theological and devotional mysteries with the safety of the practitioner in mind – by breaking down the various levels at which this book may be read, M.N. has provided a safe haven for the amateur contemplative, who would not have been eligible to participate otherwise, to practice a very difficult, but fulfilling life.



Last, M.N. is a fellow practitioner – a person, like his readers, who is seeking to understand contemplation from the position of student. As in Hilton's letters and the *Cloud*-author's advice to his students, M.N.'s prologue and glosses demonstrate a humility, whether tropological or not, that puts the reader at ease. The Yorkshire writers created a comfortable environment where a student could experiment knowing that their mentors would make sure they did not stray beyond the bounds of propriety, but at the same time would understand their desires. This is not to say that the Yorkshire circle was permissive or liberal in terms of orthodoxy, but rather that they understood the call to contemplation, even among members not traditionally open to this kind of life. These writers found ways for men and women not normally associated with this difficult life to participate and reap the rewards of an inner life that suited their outer lives as well.

The *Mirror* therefore should not be looked at in terms of the orthodox/heterodox dichotomy, and M.N. should not be judged in terms of ignorance or knowledge of what it was he translated, but rather the work and its translator must be seen in the light of a changing world. As secular and clerical hierarchies were being questioned, writers like the ones comprising the Yorkshire circle filled that void and helped to establish an interest in literacy and self-awareness that would become important in the centuries that followed. By preserving the "ancient Recordes" despite a few "spiders," M.N. and the rest of the Yorkshire circle brought the life of contemplation to a wider audience that existed beyond the realm of the Scholastics and college men.

The connections between M.N.'s translation of the *Mirouer* and the writers of the Yorkshire circle, and the intent that is expressed in his prologue and glosses when illuminated by these connections, coupled with the evidence that was dismissed by Robert Lerner – the language, the interest in translations of contemplative works into English, and the fact that English was not a popular language among those who could read in the middle of the century – all place the *Mirror* in the post-Wyclif, pre-Arundelian *Constitutions* era at the end of the fourteenth century. To suggest that M.N. might have been Michael Northburgh, the Bishop of London and part-founder of the London Charterhouse who died in 1361, also suggests that M.N. created his second translation of the *Mirror* before Wyclif and the concerns of the orthodox community of heresy and the movement started by Archbishop Thoresby's attempts at reaching out to the lay community with a translation of the *Catechism* in 1357. Dating M.N.'s work this early would render M.N.'s selection of the *Mirouer* nearly inexplicable with all of the concern that M.N. shows for the text. Placing it in the realm of the Yorkshire circle at the end of the century makes it clear that M.N. was responding to an interest in the contemplative life and his style of guidance matches him well with the Yorkshire circle's intent to make sure that its audience received all the help it would need to avoid the dangers of what it considered to be heresy, whether Lollard or Free Spirit.

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## APPENDIX A

### COMPARISON OF THE THREE VERSIONS OF THE *MIROUER*

This is a comparison of the three sources that match up with the selection from Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer des Simples Ames* found in Valenciennes 239 (f. 69-69v). I have included the chapter and paragraph breaks from the various editions so that the impact of the different emphasis placed on the passages by the editors of the three versions can be seen. The first version in each section is from the Cambridge manuscript in Middle English (Cambridge, St. John's College, MS 71), is labeled with a "C," and is taken from Marilyn Doiron's edition of the manuscript. The second is from Valenciennes 239, is labeled with a "V," and is taken from the appendix of Geneviève Hasenohr's article. The last is from the only full French manuscript of the *Mirouer*, the Chantilly manuscript (Musée Condé MS F XIV 26), is labeled with a "CH," and is taken from Romana Guarnieri's edition found in *Christian Christianorum*, Vol. LXIX.

1

C: But oo þing plesip̃ me to seie, seiþ þis soule, not for hem þat ben in sittynge, þei haue no neede, for þei ne haue what to do, but for hem þat ne ben, þat yit schulen be. Þei haue to done, for it is to hem to done þat þei be upon her garde or waitynge, þat if so be þat loue sendip̃ hem enyþing of þe same þat he haþ ordeyned hem, þat þei refuse it not for noþing þat may falle at what tyme þat it be, ne refuse þei þoo uertues neuere þat loue sendip̃ for to do þe message of þe wille of loue bi lettris encelid of his signet. *Right* so as don þe aungels of þe bridde ierarchie,

V: O mon ame, une cose me plect a dire a toi et a tous ceux qui ne sont mie en perfexion de vie, qu'il soient sur leur garde, par quoi, s'Amours leur demande aucune cose de ce meismes qu'elle leur a presté, qu'il ne l'escondissent pour riens qui avenir leur puist, a quelle heure que soit ne par quelconque vertu que Amours y envoie pour faire le messaige, car les vertus portent en lieu de messaige le volloir d'amour par lettres seellees de moi qui sui leur seigneur, ensi come font li angele de le tierce gerarchie.

CH: Mais une chose me plaist a dire, dit ceste Ame, non mye pour ceulx qui sont en estant, car ceulx n'en ont que faire; mais pour ceulx qui ne le sont, qui encores le seront (et ceulx en ont a faire!), et c'est qu'ilz soient sur leur garde, affin que, se Amour leur demande aucune chose de ce mesmes que elle leur a presté, que ilz ne l'escondissent pour nulle chose qui avenir puisse, a quelque heure que ce soit, ne pour quelque Vertu que Amour y envoie pour faire le message. Car les Vertuz portent en lieu de message le vouloir d'Amour par lectres scellees de leur seigneur, ainsi comme font le Anges de la tierce jerarchie. [end paragraph]

2

C: ...for þis witeþ wel, and I do hem wel to wite, all þo to whom loue sendiþ his message, þat if þei refuse hem at poynt þere þat uertues wolde haue hem bi þe inward wekyng of uertues þat schulde haue lordschip ouer þe body, and þei refuse hem in þis poynt, þei schulen neuere make her pees at souerayne þat þe message sendiþ, but þat þei schulen be take & troubled in knowinge & encombred of hemsilf for defaute of trist, for loue seiþ þat in greet neede men may knowe her frend.

V: Et se sachent tout cil a qui Amours envoie ses messages que, s'il l'escondissent en ce point la que les virtus le demandent par le deventrain qui doit avoir sour son corps signourie, s'il l'escondissent en ce point, que mais leur paix ne feront a moi qui le message envoie, qu'il e soient repris et tourblé en congnaissance et encombré d'eux meismez par faulte de fiance.

Car Amours dist que au grant besoing voit li homs son amy,...

CH: Et aussi sachent tous ceulx, a qui Amour envoie ses messages, que se ilz escondissent en ce point la ce que les Vertuz demandent par le dedans qui doit avoir sur son corps seigneurie, que jamais leur paix ne feront au souverain qui le message envoie, que ilz ne soient repris et troublez en cognoissance, et encombrez d'eulx mesmes par faulte de fiance. Car Amour dit que au grant besoing voit l'en son amy. [end paragraph]

3

C: Now answerē to þis, but if he helpe him þanne, whanne schel he helpe him? Seie me, for loue, whanne schal he helpe him, but if he helpe whanne it is moost neede? And þouþ I þenke þeron, seiþ loue, what meruaile is it? It bihouē me to kepe þe pees of my diuine rightwisnesse, and yelde to euery þat þat is his. Not, seiþ loue, þing þat is. [end of chapter VIII]

V: ...or me respons cy: se je ne li aide adont, quant li aiderai jou? Di moi, par amours, quant li aideray jou?

Et s'il ne m'en souvient, dist Amours, quel merveille? Il me couvient garder le paix de ma divine droiture et rendre a chascun ce qui est sien, ne mie ce qui sien n'est mie, mes ce qui sien est. [end of paragraph]

CH: Raison: Or me respondes ycy, dit Raison; se il ne luy aide au besoing, quant luy aidera il? Dictes le moy.

Amour: Et se il ne m'en souvient, dit Amour, quelle merveille? Il m'esconviert garder la paix de ma divine droicteure et rendre a chacun ce qui sien est; non mye, dit Amour, ce que sien n'est mie, mais ce que sien est. [end of paragraph]

4

C: Now vnderstandiþ, auditoures of þis booke, seiþ loue, þe glose of þis booke, for þe þing is so myche worþ as it is to preise. And nedeful is al þat þat men haue nede to and no more. And whanne I wolde, seiþ loue, and whanne it pleside me & hadde of you nede – I holde nede for þis þat I wolde it – ye refuside me bu so many messages as I sente you. But noon wote it, seiþ loue, but I aloone. I sente you þe thrones for to answeere you and to araie you and þe cherubyns to enlumyne you and þe seraphyns for to embrace or biclippe you.

V: Or entent, dist Amours, le glose de ces dis: car tant vault la coze c'on le prise et que on en a besoing et nient plus. Quant je veuch et il me pleut et je euch de toi besoing – en euch besoing pour ce que je le veuch --, tu m'escondis par tant de mesages que nuls ne le seut que jou. Je t'envoyai les Trones pour toy reprendre et ordonner, et les Cherubins pour toi enluminer, et les Seraphins pour toy embraser.

CH: Or entendez, dit Amour, la glose de ce livre. Car autant vault la chose comme l'en la prise et comme l'en en a besoing, et non plus. Et quant je voulz, dit Amour, et il me pleut, et je eu de vous besoing (j'entens besoing, pource que je le vous mande), vous me escondistes par pluseurs de mes messaiges; nul ne le scet, dit Amour, sinon moy, moy toute seule. Je vous emvoyay les Thrones pour vous reprendre et aorner, les Cherubins pour vous enluminer, et les Seraphins pour vous embraser.

5

C: Bi alle þese messengeris I sente to you, seiþ loue, þat made you wite my wille of þe beynges þere I wolde haue hadde you, and ye alwey refusiden it. And whanne I saw þat, seiþ loue, I lefte you in youre weiwardnesse bi youre witynge. But and ye hadde herd me, seiþ loue, yee hadde be al anopir, witnesse of youresilf. But ye schulen wel wite, and alle ye in liif ycombred of youre owen spirit self, þat neuer it schal be wiþoute sum encombrynge in you.

V: Par tout mes messages je te demandoie, qui te faisoient savoir ma volenté ou je te demandoie, et toy nient toudis. Et quant je vich ce, je te lessay en te manburnie, en toy sauvant; mes se tu eusses obey a mes messages, tu fuisses une autre, ou tesmoing de toy meismes; mais tu te sauveras bien atout toi en vie engombree de ton esperit meismes, qui mes ne sera sans aucun encombrer de lui.

CH: Par tous les messages je vous demandoye, dit Amour, (et ilz le vous faisoient savoir) ma volenté, et les estres ou je vous demandoye, et vous n'en faisoiez tousjours compte. Et je vi, ce dit Amour, je vous laissay en vostre mainburnie, en vous sauvant; et se a moy obeÿ eussiez, vous feussiez ung aultre, a tesmoing de vous mesmes; mais vous vous sauverez bien par vous, combien que ce soit en vie encombre de vostre esperit mesmes, qui jamais ne sera sans aucun encombrer de luy.

6

C: And al for þis, seiþ loue, þat ye wolde not obeie to my messangeres and to uertues whanne I wolde it. I sente bi many messangeres to make you fre boþe body and spirite. And for þis, seiþ loue, þat ye wolde not whanne I sente to you bi þe felynge uertues and be myn aungels. Perfore, I argue you, I may not bi *right* give you þe fredom þat I haue, for *right* may not do it. And if ye hadde, seiþ loue, obeied whanne I clepide you bi þe willes of uertues þat I sente you, ye hadde had of *right* þe fredom þat I haue. A soule, seiþ loue, what ye be encombred of youresilf. [end of paragraph].

V: Et tout pour ce que tu n'obeis a mes messages et as vertus, quant je veuch parmi [m]es messages deffranchir ton corpz et affranchir ton esperit, et pour ce que je t'envoïay et par mes demanday par les virtus soustieux que je t'envoïay et par mes anges dont je te arguay [...]. Tu eusses par droit la franchise que j'ay!

He! Ame lassee, come tu yes encombre![end of paragraph]

CH: Et pource que vous n'obeïstes a mes messages et aux Vertuz, quant je voulx par le moyen de telz messages deffranchir vostre corps et enfranchir vostre esprit; et aussi pource, dit Amour, que vous n'obeïstes, quant je vous demanday par les Vertuz subtiles que je vous puis donner de droit la franchise que j'ay, car droit ne le peut faire. Et se vous eussez obeÿ, dit Amour, quant je vous demanday au vouloir des Vertuz que je envoyay, et a mes messagiers, dont je vous arguay, vous eussez de droit la franchise que j'ay.

Amour: Hee, Ame, dit Amour, comme vous estes encombre de vous mesmes![end of paragraph]

7

C: Yhe, soþeli, seiþ þis soule, my body is in febleness and my soule in drede, and often I haue heynesse, seiþ sche, wole I or nyle I, of þese two natures, þat þe fer fre I may not haue. [end of paragraph]

V: O Amours, voirement sui! Mes corpz est en foiblece et jou en cremeur, car j'ai souvent soing, voelle ou non voelle, de ces.ii. natures, que li franc n'ont mie ne ne puellent avoir. [end of chapter]

CH: L'Ame: Voire, dit ceste Ame, mon corps est en foiblesse, et mon ame en crainte. Car j'ay souvent soing, dit elle, vueille ou non, de ces deux natures, que les frans n'ont mie, ne ne pevent avoir. [end of Chapter 77]

8

C: A soule, alas, seiþ loue, what ye haue of yuel at litel wynnynge, and al for þis þat ye obeide not to þe techynges of perfeccion in whiche I argued you to vncombre you in þe floure of youre youþe. And ye alwei yit wolde not meue you, ne noþing ye wolde do, but alwei refuside my sondis þat I made you wite bi þe noble messangeres as ye haue herd. And such folk, seiþ loue, ben encombred of hemsilf into her deþ day.

V: [Chapter title]: Comment nous demorons encombrés de nous meismes

He! Ame lassee, comme tu as de mal a pal de gaing! Et tout pour ce que tu n'obeis as enseignemens de perfexion dont je t'arguay pour toy desconbrer en le fleur de ta jouvente. Et toy, nient toudis. Tu ne ti voloies mouvoir ne nient n'en vosis faire, ains refusas mes demandes toudis, que je te lessioie savoir par si nobles messages que tu as oÿ.

Tels gens, dist Amours, demeurent encombré d'eux meismes jusques a le mort.

CH: [Chapter title:] Comment ceulx qui n'ont obey aux enseignemens de perfection demourent encombrez d'eulx mesmes jusques a la mort. lxxviii(th) chappitre.

<Amour>: Hee, Ame lassee, dit Amour, que vous avez de mal, et petit de gaing! Et tout pource que vous n'avez pas obeÿ aux enseignemens de perfection, dont je vous arguay pour vous descombrer en la flour de vostre jeunesse; et neantmoins jamais ne vous estes voulu muer, et n'en avez voulu rien faire. Aincoys, tousjours avez refusé mes demandes, que je vous faisoie assavoir par si nobles messages comme vous avez oÿ devant. Et telz gens, dit Amour, demourent encombrez d'eulx mesmes jusques a la mort.

9

C: O, wiþoute faile, seiþloue, and if þei hadde wold, þei hadde be deliuered of þat in whiche þei be in *right* grete seruages at litel profite, and schulen be as anentis þe opire. And if þei hadden herd me, þei hadden be deliuered for *right*



litel, for so litel, seiþ loue, as for to giue hemsilf, þere þat I wolde haue had hem, as I schewide hem bi þe uertues þat of þis haue þe office.

V: Sans faulte, s'il volsissent, il en fussent delivré de ce dont il sont en tres grant servage et seront a petit de pourfit, dont s'il eussent fet mon volloir, il fussent delivré pour moult pau; pour si paul come pour donner eux meismes la ou je les volloie et que je leur moustroie par les vertus qu ont de ce office. [end of paragraph]

CH: Hee, sans faille, dit Amour, se ilz vouldissent, ilz fussent delivrez de ce dont ilz sont et seront en tres grant servage et a petit prouffit; dont, se ilz eussent voulu, ilz fussent delivrez pour peu de chose. Voire, pour si peu, dit Amour, comme pour donner eulx mesmes la ou je les vouloie, et que je leur monstroye par les Vertuz, qu'ilz ont de ce l'office.

10

C: I seie, seiþ loue, þei hadde be al fre of soule and body, if þei hadden do my conseil bi þe uertues þat seiden my wille of þis (th)at bihouede to hem, or þan I me pleide in hem wiþ al my frenesse. And for þis þat þei ne dide it, (þei dwelle al in þis þat ye haue herd wiþ hemsilf. Þis þenkiþ þe fre ynoughthed and araied wiþ delites þat seen bi hemsilf þe seruages of hem, for þe uerrey sunne schyneþ in þe light of hem, ...

V: Je dis, dist Amours, qu'il fussent tout franc et d'ame et de corpz, s'il eussent fait mon conseil par les virtus qui disent ma volenté et ce qu'il couvenoît a eux, ains que je m'i embatisse a toute me francise. Et pour ce qu'il ne le fissent, sont il demoré, en ce que vous oés, avoec eux meismes. Ce sevent li franc anienti aorné de delisses qui voient par eux meismes le servage d'eux, car li vrais solaux luist en le lumiere d'eux.

CH: Je di, dist Amour, qu'ilz fussent tous frans et de ame et de corps, se ilz eussent fait mon conseil par les Vertuz, qu'ilz leur disdrent ma voulenté, et ce, dit Amour, que il leur failloit faire, ains que je m'y embatisse avec ma franchise. Et pource que ilz ne le firent, sont ilz tous demourez en ce que vous oez, avec eulx mesmes. Et se scevent les frans adnientiz, aournez de delices, qui voient par eulx mesmes le servage d'eulx; ...

11

C: ...so þei se þe motes wiþinne þe sunne-beem bi þe brightnesse of þe sunne and of þe beem. And whanne þis sunne is in þe soule and þis beem and þis brightnesse, þe body haþ no more febleness, ne þe soule drede, for þe uerrei sunne of rightwisnesse ne helide neuere soule wiþoute þe body whanne he dide

his myraclis in erþe, but þat he helide boþe bodi and soule. And *right* so he doiþ yit, but he doiþ it to noon þat haþ no feiþ of þe same.

V: Si voient les busquettes ens ou rai du soleil por le resplendisseur du sollel et du ray. Et quant tels solaux est en l'ame et tel ray et tel resplendisseur, li corps n'a mais foiblece ne li cremeur, car li vrais Solaux de justice ne sana onquez ame sans saner le corpz, quant il faisoit ses miracles sur terre, qu'il ne sanast de corpz et d'ame; ensement le fait il encore, mes il ne fait a nullui qui n'a foi de ce meismes.

CH: ...car le vray soleil luyt en la lumiere d'eulx, et voient les buchetes dedans le raiz du soleil par la resplendisseur du soleil et du raiz. Et quant tel soleil est en l'ame, et tel raiz et telz resplendisseurs, le corps n'a plus foiblece, ne l'ame crainte; car le vray Soleil de Justice ne sana ne garit oncques ame sans garir le corps, quant il faisoit ses miracles en terre; et souvent encore le fait il, mais il ne le fait a nully qui n'a foy de ce mesmes.

12

C: Now seeþ what sche is worþi and strong and *right* fre, and of alle þinges vncombred, þat feiþ and loue gouernen. But noon may come to þis, but if feiþ halowe him. I haue seid, seiþ loue, þat þei þat I have argued bi her owen inwardnesse to obeie to þe perfeccion of uertues, and to haue do it, þat þei dwelle into þe tyme of deep encombred of hemsilf þouþ þei traueiliden euery day wiþ hemsilf to fulfille þe perfeccion of þe apostles be studie of reson & of good wille, ne schulen þei neuere be vncombred of hemsilf, neiþir of body ne of soule.

V: Or oyés qu'il es grans et fors et tres frans et de toutes choses desconbrés. Qui en soi se fie, foi le saintefie.

J'ay dit, dist Amours, que cil que je arguay par le deventrain d'obeir a le perfexion des vertus et rien n'en ont fait, qu'il demoront jusques a le mort encombrés d'eux meismes. S'il se travilloient chascun jour avoec eux d'acomplir le perfexion des aposteles par estude de volenté, ne seront il mes desconbrés d'eux meismes. Nuls ne s'i atenge. [end]

CH: Or ycy povez veoir et oïr que cil est grant et fort et tres franc et de toutes chose descombrez: qui en Dieu se fie, Dieu le sanctifie.

J'ay dit, dit Amour, que ceulx que j'arguay par leurs dedans mesmes de obeïr a la perfection des Vertuz et rien n'en ont fait, que ilz demourront jusques a la mort encombrez d'eulx mesmes; et encore di je que, se ilz se tranailloient chacun jour avec eulx d'amplir la perfection des apostres par estude de volenté, si ne seroient ilz mie descombrez d'eulx (nul ne s'i attende)[.]